

# INCIDENTS OF GANDHIJI'S LIFE

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*by*  
FIFTYFOUR CONTRIBUTORS

*Edited by*  
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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
MAHADEV DESAI

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"None knew thee but to love thee,  
None named thee but to praise."

## PREFACE

THE collection of articles, brought together in this volume, contains a record of the incidents of Gandhiji's life by a cross-section of his friends and co-workers in India and abroad, who were eye-witnesses of those events and have tried to narrate them in as objective a manner as possible, though pure objectivity is impossible to attain in this world of relativity. Memories are fading; death too is taking its toll; and much valuable biographical material is being irrecoverably lost. An effort needs to be made to rescue as much of it as possible from passing into oblivion. What has been recorded in some form or other will be published sooner or later. But what has been stored in men's memories will be lost for ever if not collected in time. It was this feeling which prompted me to launch upon this venture and which very probably induced the contributors kindly to collaborate in the effort.

The work of collecting the articles started about three years back, and proceeded at a slow pace because of the rapid march of events in the country. Political changes and disturbances also contributed to the delay. I went on postponing the publication in the hope of being able to collect a few more articles, particularly from those whose contributions, I felt, would be conspicuous by their absence. No one then imagined in his wildest dreams that a misguided countryman of ours was going to make a bid for sinister immortality by assassinating the Father of the Nation. Gandhiji's death has made the collection of these memories all the more urgent and imperative. This volume, after all, contains only a small fraction of the rich harvest that awaits to be reaped. There can never be too many of these recollections. The gifted Turkish lady, Madame Halide Edib, wrote after her visit to India in 1935: "He



lowed soon after. The great patriot, whose life and writings have been an inspiration to many, thus provided a lesson in political tolerance and goodwill, which indeed we may learn today with much profit to ourselves and to our cause.

It was a part of the plan that estimates, eulogies, appreciations and panegyrics were to be deliberately avoided; and the contributors have been kind enough to accept the limitation which, I hope, has added to the usefulness of the book. In fact, in many cases, it would have been presumptuous to add any words by way of appreciation or eulogy. As the Prime Minister of India said after Gandhiji's death, "How can we praise him? how can we, who have been children of his, and perhaps more intimately children of his than the children of his body, for we have all been in some greater or smaller measure the children of his spirit, unworthy as we were?" On us is laid the more onerous burden of carrying on his unfinished task in a spirit of service and humility. For, as the poet (Henry David Thoreau) has said :

*'Tis sweet to hear of heroes dead,  
To know them still alive;  
But sweeter if we earn their bread,  
And in us they survive.*

Baroda,

C. S.

26-12-1948

MR. S. K. GEORGE (1900- )—"An Indian Christian touched to life and religion by the re-embodiment in Gandhiji of the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth." Had to resign his post as lecturer at the Bishop's College at Calcutta, in 1932, for expression of sympathy with the civil disobedience movement. Now Adhyapak at Deenabandhu Bhavan at Santiniketan. Works: *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity; Jesus Christ*.

RICHARD B. GREGG—American friend and co-worker of Gandhiji. Stayed in India 1925-27. Again visited, 1930. Works: *Economics of Khaddar; The Power of Non-violence; A Discipline for Non-violence*.

MISS AGATHA HARRISON—During World War I went into social work in factories. In 1921-24 went to China, and while there served on the Child Labour Commission of Shanghai. In 1925-28 worked in America on industrial and international questions. In 1929 came to India with the Royal Commission on Labour. Since 1931, closely associated with C. F. Andrews and, under Gandhiji's advice, helped in disseminating correct information on Indian affairs in Britain. Visited India several times since then.

MR. CARL HEATH (1869- )—One of the best known Quakers, nationally and internationally. Secretary, National Peace Council, 1909-19. Secretary, Friends Service Council, 1919-35. Chairman, India Conciliation Group. Works: *M. K. Gandhi; Pacifism in Time of War*; etc.

REV. DR. J. Z. HODGE—First met Gandhiji in Champaran in 1917. Retired after many years' stay in India. Works: *Salute to India*; etc.

MR. J. F. HORRABIN (1884- )—Journalist and artist. On *News Chronicle* (London) staff since 1911. Labour M. P., 1929-31. Vice-Chairman, India League Parliamentary Committee. Now Chairman, Fabian Colonial Bureau. Works: *An Atlas of Current Affairs, An Atlas of Post-War Problems*; etc. Illustrated H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, Nehru's *World History*, etc.

MR. JOHN S. HOYLAND—Was for 16 years in India, chiefly as Professor at Hislop College, Nagpur. Since then Professor at Woodbrooke College at Birmingham. Member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Works: *Gopal Krishna Gokhale; C. F. Andrews; Poems of Tukaram* (translated); *Gandhiji's Songs from Prison* (edited).

HON. SRI JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM (1892- ). Member, All India Congress Committee, since 1917. Imprisoned several times during the Indian struggle for freedom. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1931-34. Governor of Bihar, 1947. Minister, Government of India, since 1947. Work: *Non-violent Revolution*.

DR. RUFUS M. JONES, A.M., LL.D. (1863-1948). Professor of Philosophy, Haverford College (U.S.A.), 1901-1934. Editor, *The American Friend*, 1894-1912. Chairman, American Friends Service Committee, 1927-28, 1934-35. Works: *About 50 in number—History of Quakerism; Studies in Mystical Religion; Pathways to the Reality of God*; etc.

DR. B. D. KALELKAR, B.E. (Bom.), M.Sc., (Mass.) Ph.D., (Cornell). (1911- )—Younger son of Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar, one of the closest associates of Gandhiji. Spent boyhood at the Sabarmati Ashram. Travelled much with Gandhiji in India. A member of Gandhiji's batch in the Dandi March, 1930. Jailed several times. First Indian to win the University Fellowship at Cornell, and to be appointed a lecturer at the College of Engineering, Cornell. Made a substantial contribution to the development of one of the largest Radio-Aircraft Engines (5,000 H.P.) in the world, for the use of the American Air Force. At present Assistant Works Manager, Textile Machinery plant, near Calcutta.

SRI N. C. KELKAR, B.A., LL.B. (1872-1947). Lokamanya Tilak's most prominent disciple and colleague. Editor, *The Mahratta*, 1897-1919. Editor, *Kesari* (Marathi), 1897-99, 1910-31. President, Bombay Provincial Conference, 1920. Elected Member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1923 and

HON. SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR B.A., LL.B. (1888- )—Secretary, Gujarat Sabha, 1916-21. Secretary, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, 1921-23. President, Ahmedabad Municipality, 1930-33, 1935-36. Imprisoned and interned, 1930, 1932-34, 1940-41, 1942-44. Speaker, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1937-45. Speaker, Central Legislative Assembly, 1946-47. Speaker, Indian Parliament, 1947-48. Chairman, Gujarat University Committee, 1947-48.

SHRI GAGANVIHARI MEHTA M.A. (1900- )—President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 1942-43. Member, Central Advisory Board of Education in India and several other Governmental Committees. President, Indian Tariff Board, Government of India, since 1947. Works : *From Wrong Angles*; *Perversities*; *The Conscience of a Nation or Studies in Gandhism*.

SHRIMATI MIRABEHN, MISS MADELEINE SLADE (1892- )—Daughter of Admiral Sir Edmond Slade. Her interest in music and devotion to Beethoven's works led her to Romain Rolland, which contact led her in turn to Gandhiji. Left Europe for India and joined Gandhiji at Sabarmati in November, 1925. Accompanied Gandhiji to London in 1931. Imprisoned, 1932-33, 1942-44. Established a small ashram and cattle development centre in the Rishikesh forest area in 1947, now known as Pashulok.

SHRI PYARELAL NAYYAR B.A.—Non-cooperated as a post-graduate student, 1920. Secretary to Gandhiji, 1920-48. Editor, *Harijan* and its several editions, 1946-48. Works : *The Epic Fast*; *The Status of Princes*; etc.

DR. SUSHILA NAYYAR M.D. (Delhi)—Personal physician to Gandhiji, 1939-48. Work : *Kasturba Gandhi*.

SHRIMATI RAMESHWARI NEHRU (1886- )—Member, Age of Consent Committee, 1926-27. President, All India Women's Conference, 1940. Vice-President, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, since 1935.

H. E. SHRI M. M. PAKVASA B.A., LL.B. (1882- )—Solicitor for 30 years in Bombay. Imprisoned, 1932-33, 1940-41, 1942-44. President, Bombay Legislative Council, 1937-47. Governor of Central Provinces and Berar, since 1947.

DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA B.A., M.B., L.M. (1880- )—Medical practitioner, 1906-16. Whole-time political worker since 1916. Founded Andhra Jatheeya Kalasala, Masulipatam, 1907. Member, All India Congress Committee, since 1916. Member, Congress Working Committee for many years. President of the Congress 1948. Works : *History of the Congress*, 2 Vols.; *Gandhism and Socialism*; *Gandhi and Gandhism*; *Feathers and Stones*; *Some Fundamentals of the Indian Problem*; etc.

MR. HENRY S. L. POLAK—Gandhiji's associate and closest co-worker in South Africa, since 1904. Editor, *Indian Opinion*, for several years. Participated in, and imprisoned during, Indians' satyagraha in South Africa. Solicitor in London, since 1917.

MRS. MILLIE GRAHAM POLAK—Mr. & Mrs. Polak lived as part of Gandhiji's household for many years in South Africa. Mrs. Polak's book, *Mr. Gandhi the Man*, gives faithful and vivid pen-pictures of his life and work from 1904 to 1914.

DR. EDMOND PRIVAT—Professor, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland.

SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS, KT. (1879- )—Director, Reserve Bank of India. Delegate to the Round Table Conference in London, 1930-33. President, East India Cotton Association, Bombay. Chairman, Imperial Citizenship Association.

HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (London) (1880- )—Medical practitioner, 1905-08, and since 1911. Congressman since 1914. General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1922. Secretary, Tamil Nad Provincial

## GANDHI ANECDOTES

*Shriman Narain Agarwal*

### I

WHEN I first met Gandhiji in April, 1936, at Maganvadi (Wardha), I felt greatly disillusioned—disillusioned not because I was disappointed, but because I found Gandhiji very much different from what I had expected him to be. I, like so many others, was under the impression that the Mahatma must be full of reserve and unchanging seriousness. But to my great surprise, within a few minutes of my first personal acquaintance, I found him to be eminently human, with an ever-flowing fountain of sparkling wit and cheering humour.

“What work will you like to do for me here?” asked Gandhiji.

“I am at your service, Bapuji. Please give me orders!”

“I know that you have recently returned from England and can do good literary work; but I will not give you that work. Do you know the science of the charkha? Here is my charkha which is out of order. Can you set it right?”

“I am afraid I do not know anything about the charkha. I shall have to learn its technique first!”

“Has all your education not been a waste, then? As the Hindustani idiom expresses it, your education has amounted to ‘sieving out sands’ (*Khāṅk Chhānanā*),” remarked Gandhiji with a hearty laugh.

“I agree, Bapuji,” I smiled out.

“All right, then. I will give you the same work, in

"Bapuji, why don't you use pillows now?" I enquired with some hesitation.

"I had once read that *Shavāsana* induces sound sleep. So I am experimenting with that pose," replied Gandhiji.

"Bapuji, your life has been full of experiments. In old age, you should now experiment on others as well. Your health is too delicate and precious for such experiments."

"Oh no! My life itself is an experiment. My experiments will end only with my death," smiled out Gandhiji.

#### IV

When Gandhiji was to go on the Bengal tour last year, two third class compartments were reserved for him and his party. He found that two compartments were not necessary; his party could be easily accommodated only in one of them. So he called Kanu Gandhi and asked him to vacate one of the two compartments.

"But both have been reserved for us, Bapuji. The railway authorities have been already paid!"

"That does not matter at all! We are going to Bengal for the service of the poor and starving millions. It does not behove us to enjoy comforts on the train. Moreover, don't you observe the suffocating rush in other third class compartments? Under such circumstances, we should not occupy more space than what is absolutely necessary. Travelling 'third' with so much reserved accommodation these days will be a criminal joke!" observed Gandhiji.

No further arguments were necessary. The whole party moved out of one compartment, vacating it for other passengers.

And then alone could Gandhiji relax himself into sound sleep.

given another opportunity. I may not miss it." And we knew he had made up his mind and that he would not change it.

A large number of Quakers and others were present, as it was the first week of December, a time when many Quakers from different parts of England assemble in London to attend their committees. As we settled into the silence of the assembled meeting Mr. Gandhi was seized by a severe attack of coughing, and I was distressed on his behalf, as no doubt were others in the room. But I realised that there was nothing to be done, or rather that the best thing I could do was to yield myself up to those workings of the eternal spirit, whose purposes and overruling power we had met to seek. As I thus surrendered my own will, I was conscious of an acute headache that seemed to pass across my brow, weighing upon me for a few moments and then passing away. Peace and confidence seemed to take possession of me, and the whole meeting seemed to be wrapped in solemn stillness for the remainder of the half-hour.

When the meeting broke up, I was conscious that some of the Friends who had never met or even seen Mr. Gandhi before might hope for an opportunity to be introduced to him. But they respectfully waited for him. He whispered to me: "Do we go now?" or something to that effect. I answered: "Yes, unless you like to stop and speak to any of them." "Then let us go," he said, and in a minute we were back in the car, returning to Knightsbridge, where he had his office. As soon as we arrived there, Dr. Datta came to me and said: "Mr. Gandhi seems to have a very nasty cough, and it is no better. I think he ought to see a doctor, or at least give himself some proper treatment and reduce his engagements." "Yes," I said, "I quite agree, and I think as you are a doctor you ought to go and plead with him to do something." So we went upstairs to his office, and the Doctor began to talk to him seriously about his cough. Presently Mr. Gandhi stopped him with that joyful yet almost derisive laugh which his friends know so well, with which he dismisses the solemn but unnecessary concerns that are often brought to him. "What?"

he had attended Quaker meetings sometimes in South Africa, but he had not been at all impressed. So it will be seen that he was by no means prepossessed in favour of such silent meetings for united worship and meditation before his visit to London. Great and wise is the man who will change his mind in the light of fresh experience!

Calcutta,  
29-1-1946.

## GANDHIJI THE TEACHER

*Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*

THE late Shri Gokhale was an honoured friend of my Father's and often used to stay at our home. I may say that the flame of my passionate desire to see India free from foreign domination was early fanned by contact with him. He once said to me: "One day soon you will, I hope, see a man who is destined to do very great things for India." With this at the back of my mind I seized the very first opportunity I could of being presented to Gandhiji. This was in 1915 at the Bombay Congress when Lord Sinha was presiding. It was the first Congress I had had the privilege of attending. Gandhiji was more or less an unknown factor in the political life of India at that time. The tumultuous ovation went to the great Tilak who had just returned from the Andamans. Gandhiji spoke a few words about Indians in South Africa. With no loud speakers in those days his speech was more or less inaudible except to those on the dais or in the front rows of the audience. But there was a quiet strength, an earnestness, and a deep humility about him that went straight to my young heart; and I feel I have owed allegiance to him and his way of life ever since even though circumstances did not permit my actually joining him till much later.

comforts to which my sheltered life had accustomed me; and how understanding he was! He would not allow me at first to sleep on the ground. I was not made even to wash up my own plates etc. I was willing to do everything and pleaded with him to be allowed to do so—but Gandhiji, while he has the enviable capacity of drawing people to him, has also the even greater capacity of keeping them with him. It is because he leads gently over the rough places that he evokes complete loyalty from all and sundry.

It is in the very nature of things that all sorts and conditions come to him from the four corners of the earth. It is the old story of the maimed, the halt and the blind coming to someone who can give them succour. And just as I have seen and felt his gentle hand bringing relief to a fevered brow, just as I have seen him taking infinite delight in washing a leper inmate's sores or ministering to other sick folk—so do his words of love and sympathy bring solace to many a stricken heart. But those who are nearest to him sense in him also the hardest of hard task-masters. Which of us has not come under the castigation of his righteous indignation? On such occasions tears do not move him. "Tears are not the expression of the sorrow that should be yours," he once said to me. "They are a token of the pride and anger in you. You do not understand the first principle of non-violence which is infinite humility."

It is from the trifles in one's daily life that Gandhiji teaches big lessons. My thermos had broken. We were leaving Delhi for Wardha, and Gandhiji had said he wanted to take his evening meal on the train. I had to take hot milk as well as hot water for him. It was difficult to manage with only one thermos which was left to us. Shri G. D. Birla, seeing my difficulty, gave me a brand new one which he happened to have got only the day before. I willingly took it. When I poured out his milk from it in the train he at once—for he has an eagle eye—saw that it was a new article. Had I bought it? I told him the whole story. He was bitterly disappointed in me for having taken the gift so readily. Was I a pauper that I should make anyone spend money on me? It did not matter that



perhaps, for not having given them the opportunity for passing exams and receiving the so-called higher education. But I consider that I imparted to them far more than they would have got from school or college." That is the reason for Gandhiji's insistence on the quality of the teacher in his scheme of basic education. "Text-books are really not necessary if the teacher is, as he should be, a storehouse of knowledge."

It is alleged that women talk more than men. At any rate, perhaps they gossip more. Commenting on this over-indulgence on our part one day he said to me: "Of course you know the English proverb 'silence is golden'. Have you ever probed into the depths of this truth? If you have, you will try to set an example in this regard to the younger members of your sex who surround me. I have long since realised that one should not utter one word more than is necessary. Even my jokes (and he has an endless fund of humour) are meant to bear a lesson within them. The moment one speaks more than is necessary one veers from the truth, and you know that untruth and violence are twin sisters. My own habit of weekly silence for 24 hours sprang just as much from the desire to discipline my speech as to give myself rest and more time for quick despatch of my work." Recently he said to me: "You do not know how I strain myself to keep my thought pure. I believe thought is more potent than speech. For achieving my object I have perpetually to dive down into the deep well of truth. That alone can wash away impurity." It had happened that that morning one of our party had said something to annoy him. "I should have corrected her, of course, for her error, but I had no business to be angry with her as I was."

Nothing annoys him more than being called a 'Mahatma'. "I should not be a seeker after truth if I had stopped growing." Vital decisions are taken overnight, as it were, and adhered to with all the courage and faith born of deep conviction. This was so when he decided to move to Sevagram. Hut or no hut, rain or no rain, road or no road, he went to live there in June. The same applies to the recent lightning decisions to start the nature cure clinic

The next morning I received the following letter:

"वि. Amrit, an ideal secretary keeps her chief straight where he is going astray. She hovers round him and watches all the movements about him, picks up his papers even torn—lest he might have torn important ones in mistake, collects all she had given him if it is to be found anywhere. Therefore she leaves after him and seeks what he has left behind and, if not owned by anybody else, collects it. Now I was right in correcting you yesterday, but wholly wrong in showing disappointment or irritation. Forget the wrong and treasure the right. What I have said is by way of indication. Follow the spirit of this note, and you will be an ideal secretary.

"This is my birthday present which goes loaded with all the good wishes that I am capable of conceiving. Love, Bapu."

I doubt if anyone can possess a more unique and treasurable birthday gift.

Nothing is more delightful than to hear from Gandhiji first hand of many incidents in the early days in England and South Africa. They are probably all related in his Autobiography. Many are stories against himself related with roars of laughter, but he makes them live again by his graphic description, and his narrative always has a bearing on the matter being discussed in order to give practical instances. "It has been a rule in my life never to ask anyone to do anything which I have not tried out in practice myself."

I had the privilege of being with him when the sad news came to him of Shri Chhotelal having put an end to his life. It was a cruel blow that one who had given up his belief in violence and served faithfully for so many years should end his life by a violent act. And while Gandhiji restrained his tears the wound was deep, and he was in quiet thought for some time. Was it a heart-searching as to why he had failed to keep Chhotelalji from violence? He has often said: "I can never forget Chhotelal." I was with him too when Jamnalalji went. We arrived there very shortly after the sad event. The family was naturally distraught. The blow was sudden, the loss irreparable.

has not been able to bring his point of view home to co-workers, he has said: "I must be content to plough a lonely furrow rather than resile from a position which I am convinced is the right one." I remember so well his saying this to Mahadev on returning to his hut in Sevagram in 1939 on the outbreak of war after a meeting of the Congress Working Committee. But failure to carry conviction invariably makes him turn the searchlight inwards. "There is something wrong in my presentation of the non-violent aspect and not the fault of those who will not agree with me."

"How are you feeling in spite of the heat and the strain you are undergoing these days?" "I am very fit as you can see. Everyone is really jealous of me. But I am not as well as I should be because I get irritated very easily, and that is a sign of ill health. In me raised blood pressure too is often a result of anger."

To the thousands that come to him for solace and advice Gandhiji gives a listening ear with all the understanding of a man able to put himself into the shoes of another person. "I felt, if I was to be a guide to friends, co-workers and seekers, that I must cultivate the art of listening."

And so, those of us who live with him find in him a teacher who instructs big things from very small happenings, who chastises as "a father the son in whom he delighteth" and who inspires one and helps one to grow. And this applies equally to old or young, man, woman or child. It is the power of handling aright individuals and groups that contributes to success in the everyday life of the Ashram or village no less than in the big events that concern the country.

"I want to live to be 125, if I am able with God's help to live as I should to attain that age. I want to live so long not merely to see India politically free but also to see how I can help to bring about the Ram Rajya of my dreams whereby she can make that contribution for which the world is looking to her."

May his wish be granted!

New Delhi,

May/June, 1946.

begin beating upon kerosene cans and any other pots and pans they can lay hold on, with sticks of wood or metal, as he (Gandhi Ji) and other compatriots had begun to do, to put the monkeys to flight. Therewith the troop of Maharajas and Rajas etc. was put to flight. Malaviya Ji cried to Gandhi Ji: 'What are you saying?', and he replied: 'What have I said? Have I not said the truth? Are you and your fellow-Congressites not trying to say the same thing, though much more politely?'; and the British Banaras Commissioner, sitting beside me, muttered loudly: 'We must stop this man from talking such rot!' And Malaviya Ji ran after the routed Maharajas shouting: "Your Highnesses! Your Highnesses! Please come back! We have stopped him!" etc. But panic had gripped their souls too effectually, and none returned. Malaviya Ji rushed into that true patriot, dear good Shiva Prasad Gupta's car which he commandeered, and most unfortunately dragged me along with him, and ordered the chauffeur to Maharaja Banaras' Mint House where Alwar was housed. Fortunately he left me behind in the car; otherwise I should have been frozen to death. More fortunately, Shiva Prasad had left behind his very double-caped and double wool-lined surtout in the car, and been left by Malaviya Ji to fend for himself against the biting cold of that night, as best he could; but Shiva Prasad had the protection of his own heavy quilt of fat evenly spread all over his body! Alas! Banaras misses his genial presence and the whole country his original ideas very much. He was the parent of the enthusiasm for Hindi in press, on platform, in law-courts—not Gandhi Ji nor Nagari Pracharini Sabhas. He was the originator of that magnificent temple to Bharat Mata,—31 ft. square relief map of Mother India, in hard white Makrana marble, done to scale, with Himalaya-heights and ocean-depths all to scale, by Banaras stone-masons, under the constant instruction and guidance of that 'admirable Crichton' and equally patriotic Durga Prasad of Banaras, sculptor, painter, musician, mechanical toy-maker of life-like singing birds, astronomer, philatelist, watch-repairer, and archaeologist reading Harappa and Mohen-jo-daro and Elam inscriptions and coins—which

Nath Mishra, leader of Lucknow Bar (afterwards Judge of Oudh Chief Court), and General Secretary of Congress for the year, in sole charge of Congress Session there, and other big-wigs. I knew G. K. Mishra as a Trustee of the Central Hindu College well. As I was not a member of the A.I.C.C. I was peeping in at the gathering from a 'suture' between the tent walls of canvas, till someone saw me, and smilingly beckoned me in—it was Motilal Nehru or G. K. Mishra. So I went in and took seat in a corner. Then I saw Mahatma Ji standing behind the first row of seated members. He was in typical Kathiawadi dress of that time—all changed within a few years, very rapidly. Well, just then two grandly dressed Taluqdars came in, and nearly jostled against Gandhi Ji. One of them said: 'Myān, yeh kaun dehāti (village clown) yahān ā gayā hai?' (Hullo! who is this village-clown that has strayed in here?) The other whispered into his ear: 'Are! Mahatma Gandhi!' The other's eyes bulged, and jaws fell agape; and both quietly glided off to another corner. I have said above: 'Annie Besant was present too.' She had broken a quarter century old convention of the Theosophical Society—that its International Convention should be held in alternate years at Madras and at Banaras—in order to attend the Lucknow Congress, and, as President of T.S., had held the Convention at Lucknow that year, though it was due at Banaras. The new generation forgets, in the tremendous rush of events, that it was not Gandhi Ji but Annie Besant, who first taught 'Passive Resistance and Civil Disobedience' to India. She started the Home Rule Movement here, and was rewarded therefor by the benevolent British Indian Government with internment in the T.S. Bungalow built by Col. Olcott, the preceding P.T.S., for summer use. Her fellow-prisoners were B. P. Wadia, and the late P. K. Telang, son of that very distinguished Bombay High Court Judge, Kashinath P. Telang—as learned in both Samskrit and English as Lokamanya—and the three hoisted the Home Rule Flag on that bungalow, every time it was pulled down by the police-guard. They were let go after three months for various reasons.

difficulty than in morning. I was body-guarding him on car which could proceed at only snail's pace in that packed crowd. Public enthusiasm was so great, persons insisted on *touching* him, not content with vociferating 'ki jai', and when they could not do so, lunged forward with long thick bamboo lathis, ends of which poked against his as well as my head—nearly cracking them! If not touch with hand or foot, do so at least with end of stick! Such is Hindu superstition and indiscipline! Has Congress done anything to remedy these? We must sadly answer: "Very little if at all; only made things worse by preaching the word Swaraj, without any meaning—which was emptied out of it when Nagpur Congress of December 1920, decided to drop out of its Creed the words 'On Colonial lines'.

Well—I next saw Mahatma Ji in Bombay in June 1921, at an A.I.C.C. meeting, as a member. Lokamanya had passed away, and I saw not him, but a life-size and life-like marble statue of his in Sardar-griha, where I put up with Shiva Prasad Gupta. Shaukat Ali, 6' 2" tall, as much round, said after the meeting—at which old Vijayaraghavachari presided—when refreshments had been provided: "Let us eat as much as we can of these good things, for we will not have the chance for some years now." He had inkling of coming long jailing in Karachi.

Vast gathering on Chaupati sands in afternoon. Brief five and ten minute speeches by leaders, Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, M. R. Jayakar and others, Mahatma Ji included; he was always brief and to the point—no superfluous word, no rhetorical and oratorical flourishes or straining after effect, just as much or as little as was absolutely necessary to express his purpose. Burning of all foreign clothes, rightly, was resolved on; holocaust of which took place duly next day in mill-area. Next day, I saw Gandhi Ji at his residence, in a third storey room in a fine house. Many A.I.C.C. members were present. I asked him: "Mahatma Ji, 'Self-government on colonial lines' had some meaning. The mere word 'Swaraj' has none; or whatever each person chooses to put into it. Hindu thinks Hindu-raj; Muslim thinks Muslim-raj; zamindar thinks zamindar-raj; capitalist capitalist-raj; labourer

## GANDHIJI : 1940-1945

*G. D. Birla*

**I**T was May 1940. Gandhiji was on his way to Simla to meet the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow. He halted for a few hours at Delhi to take his bath and walk before embarking on the train to Simla. May in Delhi is generally warm, but the nights are cool. On this particular night we had a small shower which made it still more pleasant. Gandhiji often remarks that he can do without food but not without his daily prayer and his daily walk. So we started on a stroll in a leisurely fashion.

The war was still dragging on lazily. The real trial of strength had not yet begun. But perhaps Simla had already got the ominous foreboding of the future. Hitler's strength was underestimated in the beginning, but the big summer swoop that was to come had already cast its shadows.

India was quiet on the surface, but a subterranean fire was burning furiously which might any moment set the whole country ablaze. And so the Viceroy wanted to get the mind of Gandhiji.

We walked together in the moonlit night. I was full of expectation at the impending Simla talks. How could Britain be so foolish as not to appease India in such a critical period when she had not hesitated to appease even the false gods, the Fascists and the Nazis? But Gandhiji hardly devoted any serious thought to the impending talks. He was completely indifferent. What the Viceroy would say was immaterial to him. He knew what he had to say in all circumstances.

Such a psychology is peculiar to Gandhiji, which I have observed on many other equally important occasions. The master of Jujutsu never takes an offensive move himself. He deals with the attack, when it comes, in the fashion most suitable at the time. So Gandhiji deals with the situation as it arises.

In 1931 Gandhiji was in London to attend the Round Table Conference. It had caused a great stir all over Europe because for the first time H.M.G. were going to

such circumstances? The circumstances must compel them to act. In a way this war is going to right many wrongs; and India, being one of the aggrieved party, must be benefited in this war," I remarked.

"Do you believe that any wrong can do any right? War after all is an evil. How can any good come out of an evil? In any case, it is sinful even to expect to derive benefit out of anyone's distress. We should depend more on the righteousness of our own cause and actions rather than on the shortcomings of others."

I was fully reprimanded.

It was again in Delhi. The year was 1942. War was in full rage. Germany like a huge tide had long before swept over the whole of the Western European continent and had unsuccessfully knocked at the gates of Moscow the previous year. Though Germany could not enter Moscow, her fury had not subsided. Countries like Belgium and France, which surrendered without giving much fight, had escaped destruction, while those like Russia who stood the onslaught were being pounded. All the fine creation of the three Five-Year Plans in Russia was being reduced to fine dust.

If the position was critical in Europe, it was no better in Asia. Japan like a giant steam roller was advancing with amazing speed and was crushing all resistance. Citadel after citadel was falling before the Japanese onslaught like a house of cards. The invincible Singapore had already fallen, to the dismay of the whole world. Everybody was anxious to know what next.

Every home that could afford it had bought a radio set and tuned it several times during day and night to listen to the important stations. Invariably it spat out ominous news.

When Marshal Chiang Kai-shek suddenly flew to India, the object of his mission left people guessing. Had the Marshal fled for refuge to India? Such was the whisper often heard in those critical days.

Then followed the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps. This was an important event in the history of India. Every mind



But soon a new subject came up for his attention. It immediately shook him out of his pensive mood. Some domestic issues of the Ashram were to be debated and Gandhiji fell headlong into the discussion. All the big problems were shelved for the time being as if they never existed. The lack of enthusiasm in "constructing something on the Cripps offer" was in complete contrast to his keen interest in the smallest details pertaining to the Ashram. Has not Gandhiji said so many times: "What is in *Pinda* is in *Brahmānda*"?

Small details are more important to Gandhiji than any ~~big abstract~~ formula or principle. Means matter more than the end.

So the discussion continued with great concentration for nearly two hours. The discussion concluded. Gandhiji was rather fatigued. Further bad news about the war. Gandhiji drew a deep sigh.

"How funny that we should be discussing petty matters when a huge empire is crumbling to pieces!" he remarked.

"Are you sorry?"

"Yes, I am."

"But I did not know you were ever fond of the empire."

"No, I never had any fancy for it, but equally I don't like the end of an institution which took so long to build. I want to end its bad features. I want to mend it. But here it is ending under the impact of another empire perhaps worse than this one. I am always for mending things and not for ending them, if I can."

1942 has become memorable in the history of India. Japan swept the whole of Eastern Asia by its victory march. Cripps came with his famous offer and returned disappointed, failing also to fulfil the expectations of India. But another eventful chapter was now in the making.

India was bitter after the Cripps failure.

At the beginning of the war India was getting less hostile towards England. Past bitterness was gradually loosening when the Congress became the Government in many provinces in 1937. Although there were daily pin-pricks and small quarrels between the Congress Govern-

inverse ratio to his regard for his own views. He thus always acted in a most arbitrary fashion from the very beginning of the war, and the conditions grew from bad to worse. Relations that were cordial at the start of the war grew extremely bitter by the beginning of 1942. The Cripps offer was the last straw on the camel's back.

Gandhiji was in Bombay to guide and attend the eventful meeting of the A.I.C.C. in August 1942. He took very scanty nourishment in those hectic days. I found him as never before engrossed in serious thought.

"You are taking very little food these days," I remarked.

"Yes. Bombay has plenty of ozone in the air, and the metabolism is so low that one does not need too much of food here. If I take full meals, I shall fall ill. But there is another reason. My mind is more busy these days than ever before. You can't think too much and yet eat much. It is safer to keep light."

True, the factory of the mind was working furiously. The talk of some sort of satyagraha was in the air. But Gandhiji had no plan of any satyagraha.

The provincial leaders were arriving from their headquarters one after another and relating to him the situation in their respective provinces.

Describing the position of his province an important leader said: "I will relate the position in Puranic language. Once Narada went to Vishnu on a casual visit. Vishnu enquired: 'Narada, I understand rain is badly needed for the crops. What are the chances of its coming in the near future?' Narada pored over his astrological books and said: 'None, I fear; that is at least what my books predict.' But when Narada walked out of Vishnu's abode, he covered his head with an umbrella. 'Why this precaution,' Vishnu remarked, 'if there is no eventuality of rain?' 'But I related only what my books predict, not what you desire. After all events will be shaped not according to my books but according to your will.'" Summing up, the leader said, "Don't ask us what the masses think. Tell us what you think, and the masses will follow." Such was the tension in 1942.

the Japanese invasion. I will try to convince the Viceroy of our stand, and I am not altogether unhopeful."

"But suppose he remains adamant and refuses to budge. What then?"

"Well, we shall have to start some form of civil resistance then. I have not thought of it so far. There are no plans, and it is not my habit to prepare elaborate plans. The next step is enough for me, and that is to see the Viceroy. If I fail to convert him, perhaps we may start something like the salt satyagraha. I want to go very slow. There is no fun in embarrassing the embarrassed."

I was overwhelmed. Even when we talk of fight, could there be any consideration for the "embarrassed"? But that is Gandhiji.

I kept quiet for a moment. But I could not be easy in my mind. Has the Viceroy any correct appreciation of the position or of Gandhiji's mind? Here was the author of the resolution, talking of meeting the Viceroy, going slow and not "embarrassing the embarrassed". But there in Delhi maybe the Government is making panicky preparations to lock up all the leaders pretty soon.

I felt Gandhiji was underestimating the possibility of misinterpretation.

"Will you not keep the Viceroy well posted about your intentions? It is possible they in Delhi may not have been fully apprised of the true position and the Viceroy may take some hasty action."

"I don't think he will. After all, he knows me. I know him. He will not do anything until he has met me. In any case, I will write to him perhaps tomorrow. My mind is already rehearsing the draft. But I have not yet got the correct language. After the resolution is passed, I shall have ample time to think of the letter."

I felt assured. But only momentarily.

The Resolution was passed. I was not quite happy. I went to bed with a feeling of uneasiness. I had an uncanny feeling that the big leaders would be arrested at the dead of night. Gandhiji had been arrested many times before and always perhaps about midnight.

Gandhiji had his formal drink of hot water and honey, said his prayer, took his thin bamboo stick and luggage, and accompanied by Mahadevbhai walked out of his room. The Commissioner was waiting outside.

"I hope I am punctual," said Gandhiji smilingly.

"Oh, yes."

Everybody was moved to the core. At the footsteps the ladies of Birla House made the auspicious vermilion mark on his forehead. Gandhiji took his departure.

It was in the Aga Khan's Palace. A small man, very weak, extremely emaciated, clean shaven, was lying huddled in the bed under a warm sheet. This was Gandhiji on the nineteenth day of his fast. Two more days had to be passed before the fast would terminate. But none had any anxiety now about his health.

About the tenth day of his fast, his position became very serious. The whole country was tense with depression. Frustration, resentment, indignation were in the atmosphere. Every party leader and non-party leader ran to Delhi and gathered in conclave. Speeches were delivered demanding Gandhiji's release. But none desired an approach to the Viceroy. He was ruled out as a person without heart, imagination or even wisdom. The demand fell on deaf ears. It failed to move the powers that be.

In his bed Gandhiji was surrounded by a few of his nearest. He was extremely weak and could talk only in whispers. But he was cheerful and all-smiles as ever. I touched his feet and bowed. He gave his blessings.

I asked about his health. "Oh, quite good." But he was more interested in the health of others than his own. How was so and so in my family? Who was where? It was not a casual enquiry. He must have minute details of everything. He was indifferent to his weakness. Though he talked in whispers, he was full of interest in everything except politics.

As usual, he was taking a wider view. His eyes were on a long term pattern which essentially could not change. The petty happenings of the day did not matter. The straight but long course was also the shortest cut.

"Yes, I do. I feel it mentally as well as physically. In any case, if God desires me to serve for 125 years, He will sustain me."

May God grant him the 125 years. We need him for as long as God will keep him in our midst.

Pilani,  
3-2-1946.

## MY PERSONAL MEMORIES

*Fenner Brockway*

STRANGELY enough, my first personal contact with Gandhiji was financial. With Dr. Syed Hossain, I was the last secretary of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, before it was closed down in 1921. There was some delay in making the payments which were due to us, and finally I wrote to Gandhi. By return of post I received a cheque from him. I found it strange to see his signature at the foot of a cheque. I had never associated him with a banking account—not even a banking account of Congress.

During the years which followed we sometimes wrote to each other, and I learned from him that he was following with close interest our work against British Imperialism in India. In the winter of 1927 I visited India as a fraternal delegate from the Independent Labour Party to the Indian National Congress and the Indian Trade Union Congress. To my great disappointment I was involved in a motor accident just prior to the opening of Congress in Madras, and was not able to attend. I was deeply moved by the fact that each day when Congress was sitting, Gandhi came to see me in the General Hospital at Madras. On one occasion it was his Silence Day, but he seemed to appreciate at once that I was not so well. He jotted down a few lines of enquiry on a piece of paper, and I told him that I was not sleeping at night owing to pain. He took my

way had a goodness about him which very few possess.

The last time I met Gandhi was during the second Round Table Conference. I had got his permission for a friend of mine, Clare Winston, to paint his portrait. Her easel stood in a corner of the room while he sat on the floor with his spinning wheel talking to the visitors who came to him. They included important statesmen, authors and intellectuals, but Gandhi received them all alike, continuing to turn his wheel and talking to them in his simple, fundamental way. I visited him more than once and particularly remember going with the chairman of the War Resisters' International, Runham Brown. Gandhi was very interested to know that there were pacifists in most of the countries of the world and that, during the first world war, thousands of them had faced imprisonment and even death rather than engage in the violence of war. He said that when he was relieved from the responsibilities of the Indian struggle for freedom he would like to take part in a world movement for non-violence.

London,  
16-3-1948.

## A TALK IN SIMLA

*George Catlin*

THE incident in the life of the Mahatma which I have chosen here is not so much one having that human interest in which his life-story abounded—although I appreciated the honour he did me by receiving me, when in his bath, on that fifth and last meeting, so that we should have the maximum time for talking. It is the record of a conversation in Simla, at our fourth meeting, of which there is doubtless also a transcript in the *ashram*, which I believe to be of great importance in finalizing the interpretation of his teaching. I am extracting it from my book *In The Path*

able to educate *all* men, even the criminals and aggressors, into non-violence? And was that true?

"Then, by one of those unexpected turns of phrase which infuriate the Western politicians who have had to deal with the Mahatma, he added: 'If, of course, we *could* get a really impartial body, then we would all welcome a world police force.'"

When I last saw him in Delhi he spent his time stressing the amount of make-believe that existed in international affairs, the departure in diplomacy from respect for truth owing to love of power, and that non-violence never did harm to anyone. But in a letter from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, received by me after the Mahatma's death, the Simla message came through again quite clear. "He says he has no difficulty in accepting that police force against those who will not submit to due process of law."

This had followed an earlier letter from Rajkumari in reply to a letter of mine in which I had asked how anyone in the West could best follow in the path of Gandhiji. "He asked me to send you his good wishes and to say that the true soldier against evil fights the evil force at his door. For him there is no question of where he should 'begin'."

Gandhiji was concerned, when he was among us, to reconcile the Sermon on the Mount and the *Gita*, and these with the living of this practical and political life. His task was the old one of reconciling the living and moving charity of the saints with the justice of the judges who have a public function and the duty to uphold what is also a final value. How to do this is the profoundest moral issue of our troublous time. I believe that the above conversation gives some clue to how Gandhiji effected this reconciliation. To learn this was the major motive behind my two pilgrimages to India of 1946 and 1947, as well as to greet those with whom I had worked in the cause of Indian independence and of an Asia Charter of freedom—a freedom which we must seek to have inspired by the gospel of that great soul who has aroused, with his fire, Hinduism and Christianity alike.

London,

14-4-1948.

consternation of the doctor when he found what had been done. He threatened to wipe his hands of responsibility for his patient—but in two days Mr. Gandhi was sitting out on the verandah in the study arm-chair and eating fruit. We have that chair in our home now, and we always call it Mahatma Gandhi's chair.

The next scene that comes to my mind is one of our friend trudging up the hill to the Fort (Johannesburg's gaol) beside a policeman. He was not hand-cuffed—they trusted him too well for that indignity—and my sister and I walked parallel to him on the other side of the road that runs on the west of the hospital. We tried to attract his attention without letting his escort see us, but his face was straightforward. It was not until he reached the prison gate that he turned, saw us, and waved a hand, before the heavy doors closed on him for another spell of imprisonment. We admired him. He was to us an example of the greatest self-sacrifice.

Next, I picture him in the crowded Baptist Church, as it was then in Plein Street, Johannesburg, when he had travelled up from Durban specially to pay a tribute at the memorial service to my father, who died away in Rhodesia on August 15th, 1913. With words full of emotion he testified to the work of his friend on behalf of the Indian community in the great struggle. The tribute he then paid to his friend, all felt, came from a heart actuated by the same principles. He said: "Mr. Doke's was a life of perfect self-surrender. He had dedicated his all to his Maker. He would now rise with a glorified and better body for the service of his Maker." The impression of that Memorial Service centred in the tribute given by Mr. Gandhi.

There is one sentence in a letter I received from Mahatma Gandhi, written from India on 13th December, 1921, to me in England well worth quoting. It was in answer to one from me written after the troubles of those months. He wrote: "I assure you I am doing nothing without prayer." In all the hurly-burly of political strife, this side, the devout prayer-life of Mahatma Gandhi is often



Mount as portrayed in St. Matthew's Gospel chapters 5 & 6, and put to shame the majority of Christians.

In the events that subsequently followed in quick succession during the difficult period of the Passive Resistance movement in South Africa how often these fundamentals came out in his character! When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When they smote him on one cheek, he turned to them the other, metaphorically and literally. He realised that true Christianity *must* be practical and a state of living closely to the Master and living out His every command and teaching.

Young girl as I was at the time I was conscious that that was how he lived, and consequently his gracious, patient, loving character gave him an inestimable influence with his fellow men, which has persisted throughout his life. "Not everyone who saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth the will* of my Father, which is in Heaven." *Faith and Works* go hand in hand.

At the height of the great struggle of Passive Resistance we had the great privilege of receiving Mr. Gandhi into our home to care for him after he had been assaulted in the streets of Johannesburg. It would have been difficult for his people to have contact with their leader at that critical time if he had been taken to the Hospital. So the privilege was ours. How well and vividly I remember that morning when Father drove up in a cab with him and he was carried into the house! The doctor quickly followed and put in the necessary stitches, and he was made as comfortable as possible. He was unable to talk as his head was swathed in bandages, but his eyes were eloquent, and a slate was brought into use.

He was anxious to use one of the Indian remedies to hasten the healing process—a mud poultice! When it was suggested that it might interfere with the doctor's treatment, he still insisted, saying that he would take full responsibility if the doctor was wrathful. And well he might knowing the efficacy of a mud poultice!

Park Station, after having been away on behalf of the cause, or else on the arrival of distinguished visitors. Flowers and garlands were always prominent on such occasions and made things very colourful as various friends received the honour of being garlanded, whilst the crowds surged around waving and articulating their welcome. These were historical days, and Mr. Gandhi in all his humility was the central figure.

I count it an honour and a privilege to have known him, not only as a historical figure but as a friend.

Kafulafuta (N. Rhodesia),

12-5-1946.

PS. (5-4-1948)

This afternoon the picture that has persisted in my mind is of the various occasions on which I saw Mr. Gandhi garlanded. At Johannesburg station excited and patriotic crowds, both Indian and European, met him when he was released from Volksrust prison where he had been serving his time for having broken the law by crossing the Natal border during the Passive Resistance movement. As the train drew in and he stepped out, great garlands of the most beautiful flowers were thrown around his neck until he could hardly move with them, and the station officials, yes, and the police looked on in amazement. He never liked this publicity, but accepted it gracefully and humbly as he was piloted down the platform to the waiting cars at the entrance. I have seen Park Station, Johannesburg, wonderfully decorated in his honour as time and again he arrived after some big crisis in the Passive Resistance movement.

Then the banquets held in his honour, or to honour some colleague in the movement, were a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Everything of the best, and no trouble spared to entertain the hundreds of guests who were invited. As we sat at the long tables down the middle of the room our eyes were turned to the table across the top where the Guests of Honour sat all garlanded in exquisite flowers, and as Mr. Gandhi rose to speak there was a great hush and one could feel the influence of his personality pervading all. Although frail of body and small of sta-

secutions of Jews and Poles, were so much beyond all that one knew that in *comparison* with them the Allies looked almost as examples of nobility and righteousness. Their victory seemed the only salvation from hell.

After one year I returned to India with one anxiety, one burning question: Where will India be? Will she throw her power quickly, willingly, spontaneously on the side of the 'better ones'—in spite of the fact that her own oppressor was among them?

I discussed the matter with Gandhiji. No need of repeating his opinions, they are well known. I was not convinced. All my heart was full of the agonies of the peoples of Europe; all my mind full of memories of horrors and barbarities against humanity itself. I felt the cause of mankind was at stake.

I was against Gandhiji's 'individual Satyagraha', feeling it could only add to the mass of hatred; I was against all 'direct action' in the midst of the gravest war, as the Cause of Humanity seemed to me to be also the Cause of India, and I could not imagine the two being dissociated.

My feelings were burning. Not being able to see Gandhiji in 1941-42 and discuss with him fully the matter, I wrote one, two, three letters. It is immaterial whether I was right or wrong. I wrote with utter frankness, but as the feeling was strong so were the words; used in my habitual blunt way, they were almost hard. . . . . I got one, two replies. My last letter reached Gandhiji in August, 1942, a few days before his arrest.

I can now turn to his reactions. The answers to my letters were exquisite; loving, kind, deep; "Even if we disagree, Uma, our mutual affection must not suffer from it." (I am quoting from memory, the originals being for the moment out of my reach.)

Almost on the eve of his arrest, in a talk with our common friend, Maurice Frydman, he mentioned my letters with sadness. Amidst all the tremendous problems, pre-occupations, griefs and toils—the A.I.C.C. session, the historic resolution, the upheavals in the country—he had enough interest for the feelings of a distant, insignificant person, to concentrate for a moment his attention on her, to

means to lose instantaneously their friendship; this unique trait in Gandhiji's character is more striking and worthy of deep reverence than ever. He is indeed, in his very being, in his everyday behaviour, the very opposite of everything petty, narrow, ugly, mean. Was not his attitude towards me the sign of the broadest tolerance, the greatest respect for the feelings of an individual, the sign of real magnanimity?

\* \* \*

My next experience worthy of record was in 1945, during the tragic rising of Warsaw, when the heroic capital of Poland, incited by the Russian frantic appeals and the Allied promises of air and parachute help, rose in a tremendous revolt against the Nazi occupants, and, deceived, betrayed by both the Soviets and the Allies, sustained for 63 days the desperate, hopeless fight. Bapu was then in Bombay. I saw him frequently. He enquired with a touching anxiety about the last news; he cheered me up; he never 'condemned' the armed, 'violent' struggle of the Warsaw people; he was rather calling it—just like the Polish resistance in 1939—'almost non-violence'. It is then that he wrote the wonderful message for the bleeding Warsaw, which I included as a foreword to a book on the epic fight under the title—*All for Freedom*. The message written in his own handwriting, on a day of silence, was: "Warsaw's grief is Poland's, and Poland's is all afflicted World's."

His compassion, his deep understanding of my country's agonies, was revealing the greatness of his heart, which was able to embrace the whole world, if it could feel the griefs of a distant land like those of his own. And the far-sightedness of his judgment was proved to me by his warning that Poland would be further betrayed by the Allies and 'sold out' to a cruel enemy. One year more and his 'prediction' came true. Poland, against the will of her people, against her frantic opposition, was cynically 'delivered' to Russia as an inanimate object. Gandhiji had no illusions as to her fate under the Soviet occupation. He knew the activities of the Communists in India as well as in other countries. When we discussed the matter in 1945, on my return from Punjab with some documents, he exclaimed:

Segaon, Wardha, 3-1-1937.

Dear Fielden,

I welcome the confidence you have given me. My sympathies are with you in your troubles. But you have to take them philosophically if you must stick to the post even though it be to the good of the country. Any attack on your personal character is a vile thing. But every society has its share of blackmailers. These you should laugh at. Then there are the critics. You must not expect informed criticism. Very few write for the public good: most write for money. Then there is the third class who don't come to you as you would have them do. They don't in spite of themselves. Those who know you would like to avail themselves of the facilities you may give them, but they know that the harm done by such co-operation will be greater than the good intended. Take Rajkumari herself. Even she could go only a certain distance and no further. You must not grieve over this but take it as inevitable in the circumstances surrounding us.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi.

London,  
27-12-1945.

## GANDHI—MAN OF GOD

*Welthy Honsinger Fisher*

**M**Y husband, the late Bishop Fred B. Fisher, loved and understood India and her people more deeply than any American I have known. He began to study the country, its literature, its philosophies and its people fifteen years before he met Mr. Gandhi, for as a young man of twentytwo with a passion to "win the world for Christ in this generation", he went to live, teach and preach in Agra.

That was in 1904 when the whole world was quiescent under an overpowering, impregnable imperialism.

Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done on Earth....," he knew that Gandhi too prayed and worked to this end.

Gandhi had made his first great experiment in non-violence in South Africa, but he had so believed the first world war to be the end of all wars that he had even helped the British to enlist Indian soldiers, and he had returned to India to work for a developing programme toward freedom within the empire.

He lived too near to God to be a mere national rebel. What was the explanation of his strength of character? Gandhi told my husband of his Vaishnava mother and of her influence on his life. My husband saw farther than Gandhi knew, for he too had a Puritan mother whose good opinion he craved even as a grown man and a Bishop of the church. Gandhi's trained legal mind, his astute statesmanship, were not the crown of his greatness, according to Fred Fisher. It was that unusual vicarious ability to put himself in another's place, and thus he became the spokesman for the common man, the forgotten man. As Gandhi brought the principles of ahimsa and satyagraha from the limbo of India's religious past, to be used as a natural weapon in the present, Fred Fisher began interpreting these principles to large audiences in America in the hope that Christians throughout the world would work with Gandhi for a world without war.

It was not until the Kanpur National Congress in 1925 that I met Gandhi. The Bishop and I had just returned from South Africa where we had studied the condition of the Indians there which similar conditions Madame Pandit has recently presented so powerfully on the rostrum of the United Nations. There, in Africa, we visited Manilal in the Tolstoyan Colony at Phoenix, and lived over with him the story of the Indian Colony as established by his father and mother where caste and outcaste, Moslem, Sikh, Parsi and Christian lived and worked together as Indian brothers.

At I sat with Gandhi in silence at that first meeting in Kanpur (it was Monday) I sensed for myself the quality of his vicarious love for people. I knew that he was a man who had given all he had of his possessions and mind and

to his graceful flowing gown. I went vestless, but somehow I just couldn't take off my coat. Shoes, of course, came off. We are convention-bound, we western men. I realized it in awful contrast these hot days."

"At the sunset hour we took our several walking sticks and walked cross-country towards the sunset. Gandhi's staff was almost twice his height and was nothing but a rough branch of a tree.

"We made an odd assortment—legs and sticks, striding off towards the sunset. I believe Gandhi could beat us all—if we had been in a walking race. That little giant's ninety pounds has every muscle counted and at work. He likes to talk while he walks and he gets into the rhythm of it; but the poet likes to stride on alone, so I walked with Gandhi. He sent his love to you and hoped your ankle would soon be strong enough to keep up with me!"

That was like Gandhi. He never forgets people. In the midst of great political stakes, he remembers people and with love!

Fred went on, in a lighter vein, telling me intimate things about Gandhi. "He sleeps on Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*—'makes an excellent pillow,' Gandhi laughed.

"We passed one of Tagore's cows from his new agricultural experiment station for the villages. It was a soft-eyed, well-fed, high-bred bossy, and somehow it winked at us almost humanly. Gandhi pulled up some grass and fed it.

"Isn't she the best friend of man on earth?" asked Gandhi, patting her. 'Of course, I believe in reverence for the cow,' he went on. 'To me she symbolizes the basic teaching of our Hinduism—that all life is part of God.'"

"Gandhi and I talked of the ahimsa (non-violence) philosophy," Fred continued, "and how it happened that he could popularize that doctrine into an effective weapon for India. We decided it was because Buddhistic attitudes had so deeply permeated the Indian background although Buddhism, as a religion, had almost disappeared in India.

"Sunday was the great day of our week-end. In the morning after our solitary meditations we casually drifted over to the poet's doorway.

"Those two great men are vastly different, yet at one in purpose. Tagore is like—Mount Everest. He towers majestic. He is, in some ways, far off—He seeks abstract Truth. But Gandhi—is like the leaping cataract on the mountain-side trying to reach the stream to add his life to the parched stream below where the people thirst."

When I revisited India in 1939 alone, I was drawn immediately to Wardha and to the little mud-walled capital of the new India where the Gandhian spirit pervaded that small community and sent out sparks of true reform to the ends of the continent.

I saw him day after day in Delhi and attended his evening prayer. I shall not soon forget the Good Friday of 1939, when Gandhi after the formal prayers had been said and sung, asked the few Christians sitting there, C. F. Andrews, Agatha Harrison, and myself to sing his much-loved Christian Hymn, "Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on."

The world will be quoting Gandhi long after present-day passions have cooled.

~f "Civilization," Gandhi says, "is the conquest of one's mind and passions. We can conquer an enemy without hating him.....and moral force is greater than navies."

And now when so much of the world has fallen into the unthinking habit of blaming all India's troubles on the Hindu-Muslim skirmishes, Gandhi, the Man of God, has gone into the center of the disturbance, there to work out his gospel of love, friendship and co-operation with understanding. This to me is the most far-reaching religiously motivated experiment going on in the world today. He has become the practical leader on the road toward the Regnancy of God. When I was writing the life of my late husband, Gandhi wrote me a letter which I included in the book and which will be treasured as long as life lasts.

"Dear Sister," he wrote, ".....I had the privilege of coming in close contact with the late Bishop Fisher. He seemed to me to be one among the few Christians who walked in the fear of the Lord and therefore feared no man."

New York,  
17-2-1947.



with the actions of other national leaders generally considered great. Winston Churchill is versatile and paints landscapes and lays bricks as a hobby, making his own garden walls. But I have seen no reports of his using his hands for the benefit of his followers or guests or the common man. Stalin as a communist professes to work for the benefit of the masses, but I have not heard of his doing so with his own hands. Franklin Roosevelt talked persuasively about manual workers, but did no manual work himself. Bapuji identified himself with the workers in deed as well as in word. I could not help remembering the words of Jesus Christ—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and "Whosoever would be chief among you let him be your servant."

2. One afternoon at Sabarmati I went to Bapu's house to talk with him. As I went in I noticed that a tall Pathan was lying fast asleep on the verandah. Bapu remarked that the man had come a long distance to see him, and after a talk had lain down there quite naturally and gone to sleep. He was no leader. He looked like an ordinary Pathan moneylender. Somehow the incident seemed to me typical of Bapu's hospitality and accessibility to every kind of person.

3. Just after the rains in 1925 I came down from a visit with S. E. Stokes in Kotgarh, Simla Hills district, and went to Calcutta to be awhile with Bapu. He was then raising money for a hospital as a memorial to the recently deceased Bengali leader, C. R. Das. Mahadev Desai was with Bapu. The three of us slept in the same room together. Every morning at four we had prayers and worship of God, just as at the Ashram. That, too, seemed typical of Bapu always to put worship of God as the first duty of every day, no matter where he was or what the other business of the day might be.

4. Once at Sabarmati Bapu had been sick with a fever. It used up his strength a good bit. Shri Ambalal Sarabhai and his gentle wife came over to beg of Bapu to go to their house in Ahmedabad to get a rest and recover his strength. They came in the afternoon after 3 o'clock when Bapu was accustomed to receive visitors, and I happened to be in the room chatting with him just before they came.

members a chance to see Sardarji and cry out to him "Jai Jai". That seemed to me significant.

6. Here is a letter Bapu wrote to me from Sevagram on 20th January, 1945:

"My dear Gregg, Your letter makes me glad and sad. Glad because of your faith and enthusiasm, and sad because of Radha's illness which you say is beyond recall. I am hoping that in this at least you will prove wrong. Nevertheless you and I can say: 'His will, not ours, be done.' I believe also that what passes for misfortune is not always really so. Of these things, in spite of scientific advance, we know so little.

"When your revised book comes, of course, if I do not read it, Pyarelal or others will, and I shall know. Love to you both,—Bapu."

Putney (U.S.A.),  
15-1-1946.

## SOME IMPRESSIONS

*Agatha Harrison*

**I**N 1921, my work took me to China. Those were tense days in Indo-British relations; many Congress leaders had been arrested; from the questions put to me I realised how closely China watched Indian affairs—particularly in connection with Gandhiji.

It was not until 1929 that I saw him when I accompanied the Royal Commission on Labour to India. He was in Delhi at the same time we were; and hearing he was speaking, I went to the meeting. It was my first experience of an Indian crowd; thousands of people were sitting in the blazing sun; at the far end was a small platform to which, much to my embarrassment, I was led. With the exception of a woman missionary I was the only British person there. Suddenly I saw a small figure threading his way through

mountain of material awaiting his attention. He always finds time for humble, suffering folk.

Before he left London, Gandhiji laid on a few of us here the need of "working for mutual understanding between our two countries". When I asked him for some guidance on this task, he replied: "God will direct your steps."

Early in 1934 I went to India to "see and listen". On arrival, I found a letter from Gandhiji saying he was making a tour of the earthquake-stricken areas of Bihar with Rajendrababu—and would I like to accompany them? He said he could offer me "no European comforts"! In spite of this (for he is a most thoughtful host) a large packet of tea was included in the stores we carried, which he called "poison". He gave me an amusing lecture on our British habit of tea-drinking, said we were a dyspeptic nation because we drank so much of it. All the same, I noted during the trip that several of his entourage seemed anxious to share my "poison" round about 4 o'clock each day!

Those were incredible weeks, in which I saw him and Rajendrababu move amongst homeless people steadying their morale. His message was always the same: "What has this calamity taught you? This is no time for differences between Government and Congress; between Hindu and Muslim; between Touchable and Untouchable. If you take money from the Relief Fund, see that you earn it."

Later, we toured parts of Orissa, in connection with work amongst Harijans, always followed by masses of villagers. The Mahatma has a puckish sense of humour. On two or three occasions he took it into his head to break into a run as we neared our resting place for the night. So, perforce, everyone else had to run too or run the risk of being trampled underfoot. Pierre Ceresole and I panted along behind—not, I recall, with conspicuous success!

The tour provided many opportunities for talking with Gandhiji about all that had taken place since he left London in 1931, and of the obstacles to work for "mutual understanding"—in which his fasts had played a part.

far ahead of their time". I took the paper over to him; his expression, while reading it, was a study. Then, selecting a minute piece of scrap paper he wrote:

"Do you know of a dreamer who won attention by 'adventitious aid'?"

With a broad smile he handed me the slip of paper, and went on with his work I had interrupted.

A message has reached me from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Norway, saying they were nominating Mr. Gandhi for the Nobel Peace Prize this year. And in the press of March 16th, 1947, there is the following:

"Candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize this year include President Eduard Benes, Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Herbert Lehman (former Director of UNRRA), and Sir John Boyd-Orr."

Another incident occurred during the tour which I record as being typical of Gandhiji's sense of justice and fair play. Attached to our party was a hefty young German about 18 years old. Gandhiji had given him permission to join him, as he does anyone who is eager to learn more about his way of life. The young man acted as a volunteer and made himself generally useful; in his spare time he typed long letters and articles and sent them back to Germany.

It was known to all of us that Gandhiji had taken a self-imposed vow to make no political speeches during the tour—and naturally that none of the party would. At one place in Orissa we stopped for several days, and while there (unknown to the rest) the young German addressed a large gathering of students. Had he spoken about what was going on in his own country, there might have been no trouble. Instead, he chose to deliver himself on the iniquities of British rule in India, and cited tales of repression he had heard. The next day came a letter from the British official in the district warning him that, if he took part in further meetings, he must leave the province. Delighted with this further proof of British imperialism, the young man showed his letter to Gandhiji. Rarely have I seen the Mahatma more angry. He turned on the lad

With war on the horizon, I spoke to him of the longing of some pacifists in the West that he should come over and meet with us quietly so that we could have the benefit of his deep experience in the practice of non-violence. He said he must first prove his method in India; how could he teach other countries until this was done? I appreciated his viewpoint, but was not convinced. Yet one had to admit that, with events moving so fast, it might have been impossible for him to do what some so ardently wished, i. e. that he himself would go to Herr Hitler.

The years 1939-45 were like a very bad dream. Work for "mutual understanding" between India and Britain presented insuperable difficulties. Mails were delayed or lost in transit, we had little to interpret the many statements made by Gandhiji and other leaders. The whole country was geared to the war effort; the majority regarded its waging as a kind of crusade; anyone, who in the written or spoken word questioned what was going on, was liable to be dubbed "Quisling", "anti-British", etc.

In the middle of 1940, soon after Dunkirk, Gandhiji's appeal, 'To Every Briton', was cabled over in extracted form. The press headlined that he had asked us to lay down our arms, and had suggested we should invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to "take possession of your beautiful island". The full text of his statement came later; but the harm had been done by lifting out extracts that inflamed opinion. For the country had its back against a wall, struggling for its very existence, and few were in a mood to study the eternal truths that underlay the other parts of what Gandhiji said.

There followed the individual civil disobedience campaign; the failure of the Cripps Mission (that many laid to Gandhiji's door); finally the 'Quit India' resolution of 1942 brought feeling against him to a climax. "A stab in the back"; "Anti-British"; "Impeding the war effort"; etc. The cartoons appearing at that time reflected the deep hostility against him. The text of the Congress resolution, with its statesmanlike review, received scant attention by reason of its last sentence. A threat had been made to

So often over the war years we heard: "Mr. Gandhi is a spent force." I found no "spent force", and marvelled at the hold he has on people of all shades of opinion. To have such power—a power derived from spiritual forces—is unique in this day and age.

When the Cabinet Mission came to Delhi, Horace Alexander and I went there too. We knew the Cabinet Ministers personally; we had the privilege of knowing the Indian leaders; opportunities might arise for work of "mutual understanding". They were difficult, arduous days. Gandhiji's small mud hut in the Harijan Colony—a stone's throw from the Viceregal Lodge—was the nerve centre to which gravitated people from all over India and the world.

Through these weeks in Delhi and Simla there was further opportunity of talking with him about the present and the future. Just before my plane left Delhi I went to say good-bye to him. Fifteen years before he had said: "God will direct your steps." He said much the same now.

Across 6,000 miles we watch his latest experiment in the technique of non-violence—described in one paper "as an effort in spiritual awakening it has few parallels in history." In a letter to me from Shrirampur he says:

"Here I am in an inaccessible part of Bengal and dealing with the most difficult part of my mission in life.... If my mission succeeds here, I shall be fit enough for further work."

That he is needed in Bengal and Bihar has been proved. But a new situation has arisen since the British Government fixed June, 1948 for the transference of power from British to Indian hands. Gandhiji's dream has always been that this should be achieved by peaceful means. Will he perhaps see that "further work" awaits him in Delhi?

London,  
20-3-1947.

writers, journalists, social service workers and others. He came, and was supplied with a typed copy of a list of questions, which those coming desired to put to him. These he read aloud, one by one, answering each with an engaging frankness. Many differed from his judgments naturally, but all felt that the opportunity had been a unique one for getting at the mind of the man foremost in the thoughts of Indians. It was felt too that this gathering was suggestive of further possibilities of direct contacts and resultant understanding.

So we formed the India Conciliation Group, and from that day in 1931 to this, this Group has had the privilege of innumerable personal and private discussions with all manner of outstanding Indian men and women who have come to London; with many British men and women who have either given long years to the service of India, or have paid special visits thereto; and with many distinguished Continentals and Americans to whom India means much. This Group, through Mr. Gandhi and others, has been in close touch with many in India; and has also maintained a personal relationship with the Secretaries of State, successive Viceroy and Governors, Judges and others, with the India Office itself, and with the Office of the High Commissioner for India, and with many Members of Parliament. Miss Agatha Harrison has been its Hon. Secretary from the beginning, and very much is due to her capacity and sound judgment of men and affairs. The Group members have varied views, and have sought to understand sympathetically those of all parties, races and religions in this Indian context. Its one uniting aim is a progress by intelligent conciliation. It has been productive of much friendship and good understanding. Many have co-operated in this. But it will never be forgotten that its origin is due to that unique meeting with the magnetic personality of M. K. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi's visit to London coincided with the continued boycott of Lancashire goods in India. With no small courage he accepted an invitation to go to Lancashire and see for himself the effect of the boycott. In Darwen, a cotton town, he was faced by a public meeting at which the cotton-operatives put before him all that they were

declined, and sat down on the ground facing our host. I have no record of the talk at hand. It concerned the current problems of that time, now nearly ten years ago; and the general principles of life that Gandhi stands for. He showed all the time that vital mind that seizes a question at once and has a direct answer. Or, and this is one of his greatest qualities, frankly confessed that he had no answer, or that a previous belief of his had been a mistake. I have often quoted that really great saying of his: "I am not consistent with the *past*, I am consistent with the *truth*." That saying marks him as the dynamic man. There is nothing static in M. K. Gandhi. And he has that engaging grace of humour. When we rose to leave:—"Where is your wife?" said he, for he had met her also in London. "In Itarsi where we are staying," I replied. "Well," said he with a merry smile, "tell her I shall never forgive her if she leaves India without coming to see me."

So with this word, and before we left the Central Provinces for Calcutta, we came down some weeks later by road from Itarsi, a long and very, very dusty road.

I told him that one of my main reasons for coming to India just then, was due to the very large number of political prisoners; a matter that was greatly moving the Society of Friends, of which I am a member. The Society has a long record on penal questions, and I had been commissioned to visit the Viceroy on this matter. The Viceroy was willing that I should do so, but at that time was paying some visits to various capitals in India and could not see me till some weeks later. But I told Mr. Gandhi that I had planned to go to Calcutta first, and see Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal at that time, who had expressed a willingness to discuss this prisoner question with me. Mr. Gandhi asked me to tell Sir John that he, Gandhiji, would be very glad if he might visit him concerning the Bengali prisoners. I believe Sir John would have been glad if this had been immediately workable, but up to that time the new Viceroy had not seen Mr. Gandhi, and official etiquette prevented the Governor receiving him first.

On the second visit I found Abdul Gaffar Khan staying



agrarian discontent. (2) The favoured position under which indigo planters, most of whom were British, held and farmed their extensive estates was another root of agrarian bitterness. It chanced that long ago the Bettiah Raj, which is the largest landowner in Champaran, fell into grave financial difficulty and was extricated by a timely loan from the planters. In return for this they were granted long term leases, and these leases conferred the right to exact from their tenants an undertaking to employ a certain portion of their holdings in the growing of indigo. This was known as the 'tin kathia' (3 cottahs in the bigha) system and was a measure of compulsion pure and simple. Naturally, it gave rise to widespread resentment. But the days of natural indigo were numbered: clever German scientists had discovered the secret of synthetic indigo, and the discovery meant the death of indigo-growing in India as a commercial investment. Apprehending the coming disaster the planters beat a financial retreat by entering into a treaty with their opium-growing tenants whereby, in return for a lump sum in token of compensation, the obligation to grow indigo would be annulled. Glad to escape from an irksome burden many of the tenants readily paid the compensation asked. Some, however, refused to do so, and it was primarily in their behalf that Mr. Gandhi came to Champaran. The circumstance that one of the men who sent the invitation was a young banker friend of mine probably accounted for Mr. Gandhi's coming to see us shortly after his arrival.

Investigation was the first duty and, assisted by a group of splendid helpers, Mr. Gandhi set himself to the task in real earnest. With characteristic expedition he submitted a preliminary report and, as a result, the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry and, very wisely, made Mr. Gandhi a member of it. The Commission reported in due course, and the outcome was the Champaran Agrarian Act which finally liquidated the 'tin kathia' system, settled the vexed question of compensation, and removed other causes of discontent. In helping to right these agrarian wrongs Mahatma Gandhi won the gratitude and affection of the peasants of Champaran, and I doubt if there are homes in India where he is more loved and re-

In fact, co-operation had become my guiding star. The inhibitions and disabilities under which the Bihar peasant lived and toiled had long oppressed me, and I had welcomed the coming of the Co-operative Credit Movement to Champaran as an Arctic whaler imprisoned in the ice might welcome the coming of spring. Mr. Gandhi himself, moving on the higher political plane, hardly shared my enthusiasm for Co-operation; but he very kindly deputed one of his colleagues, the late Dr. Dev of the Servants of India Society, to help me in organising village co-operative societies. Dr. Dev was a choice spirit, and I look back with pleasure on the days and nights we spent together introducing this way of escape from the rapacious moneylender to the unlettered villagers of Champaran. Mention of Dr. Dev reminds me of another engaging Gandhian quality, the genius for attracting men and women of ability and devotion to his standard and the service of their country. That surely was an authentic mark of leadership. It was in those early Champaran days that he captured Rajendra Prasad, another soul of good quality who is today one of his country's tried and trusted leaders. And what shall I say of Mahadev Desai, most capable of secretaries and most loyal of friends? It was an auspicious day for India when he responded to the national call and joined hands with Mr. Gandhi. The relation that held between them, as we saw it in those Champaran days, was very beautiful. It was a union of hearts that beat as one in the service of India. And not only the service of India, for to them the cause of India was the cause of humanity. Here let me record another Champaran memory: I found no trace of racialism in the Gandhi family circle. We knew Mrs. Gandhi well and had the privilege of entertaining her in our own home. Instead of finding in Mr. Gandhi an austere ascetic we found in him a social neighbour, a companion to go out with in all weathers. Our young people took to him at once, and only the other day the younger son home, from the war, which included the Burma campaign, showed us as one of his treasures a post card he had received from Mr. Gandhi when he was a school boy in England. Mr. Gandhi's sense of humour made our visits to him and his to us pleasant occasions; we shared the

West and East through the spinning wheel was one of Sir Daniel's chiefest delights, and when he died it was but fitting that Mr. Gandhi should write: "We shall all miss good Sir Daniel." Mr. Gandhi was never able to visit Gosaba; but he and Sir Daniel Hamilton met in Nagpur and shared treasures such as only great minds can share. Had Mr. Gandhi not come to Champaran in 1916, this memorable interview of 1938 would not have taken place.

There is much more I might write about these far-off Champaran days; but I must pay heed to the clock. Compared with Mr. Gandhi's achievements in the ampler arena of national and international politics, the passing of the Champaran Agrarian Act, touching as it did a local situation, may seem of little account; but of this there can be little doubt that it was one of the compelling circumstances that led him to give himself unfettered to the national cause. No ashram and no organisation was big enough to hold him, and his Champaran experience entered into the very fibre of his public life. I know he dislikes eulogy; but I think readers will pardon me if I record two tributes paid to him in my hearing by two very different persons. The first came from my friend and neighbour Jokhan Singh, a Rajput peasant and a veritable 'village Hampden', who said: "God sends but one Mahatma Gandhi in a thousand years." I shall not soon forget the reverence with which he said it. The other tribute was spoken by the late Sir George Rainy, then a member of the Champaran Agrarian Commission, who said: "Mr. Gandhi reminds me of the Apostle Paul."

The Champaran Agrarian Act has not yet made Champaran a colony of heaven. It has, however, introduced a new order of self-respect; and if the peasant there today walks with a head more erect and a step more confident than his fathers did, it is because some 30 years ago Mahatma Gandhi passed that way.

Edinburgh,  
19-6-1946.

drawn a good many cartoons in which Mr. Gandhi figured—cartoons not always uncritically sympathetic to the cause of Indian Nationalism, nor to its great champion. Would Mr. Gandhi show any resentment? I might have known better. The twinkling smile at once gave evidence, not merely that he bore no malice, but that he had enjoyed the cartoons. Low also has a friendly smile; and for some minutes the two great little men twinkled at one another in happy conversation.

Mr. Gandhi twinkled for a couple of hours on end one evening when, in my Gower Street flat, he sat surrounded by a small crowd of journalists—the dailies and evenings, the weeklies and the quarterlies were all there—who rained questions on him, some friendly, some hostile. Long before the two hours were up the crowded room looked much more like a happy social party than a political gathering. And it would assuredly have gone on for another two hours, had not the watchful Mr. Desai intervened to carry off his chief to another engagement.

My last glimpse of Mr. Gandhi was highly characteristic. I had gone to talk to him while the Conference was in session at St. James' Palace, to discuss with him the possibility of his addressing a public meeting during the forthcoming annual conference of the Labour Party. We chatted for some minutes in a small ante-room. Then, catching sight of a clock, he remembered another appointment, apologised, and hurried away. I watched him disappear down one of the long corridors of the Palace; his robes tucked up, his slippers twinkling as he ran. Dare I say it?—I am sure, at least, that no friend of his will misunderstand me if I do:—I was irresistibly reminded of one of those Chaplin films which end with the little figure hurrying away to the horizon, gradually lost to sight in the distance. The memory of a last glimpse of that kind lasts far longer in one's mind than would that of a more conventional leave-taking; because it is the memory of a human figure, and of one whose greatness was rooted in that very humanity.

London,  
25-2-1947.

Mahatma Gandhi went on to say that the dole was an insult to humanity (I could appreciate his words, for I had been living in an unemployed family at Brynmawr in South Wales, where the Ceresole team was at work, at the time when the ten per cent cut in the dole, and the Means Test, were introduced, and I knew how the unemployed felt about it). "Tell your unemployed friends," he went on, "to refuse the dole as an insult, and to come out on the streets with their wives and children, and starve in public. If they had the courage to do that, your Government would give way in a week, and do the right thing by them." It was grim advice, and I fear I never plucked up courage to hand it on. But the Mahatma's own example had already testified, and was to testify again and again in the years ahead, to the triumphs that may be achieved by the courage which turns the evil will into good will, by taking self-chosen suffering patiently upon itself, instead of imposing it upon others by rifles or machine-guns, or bombing aeroplanes.

He went on to urge me to realize what property I could, turn it into land, and establish a land-working community, in which should be associated a dozen unemployed families and a dozen middle-class families. I feebly protested: "But what about my children?" "Take them in with you," he replied; "on no account leave them outside. Establish a school as one of the activities of your new community, and bring them up as part and parcel of the community. I have tried both ways myself, and I know which is right. Have some subsidiary industry—for instance, spinning and weaving—also practised in your community, for rainy days and spare moments."

Next I asked him about the reasons for his choice of the two hymns which he had named for our use the evening before. He told me how '*Lead Kindly Light*' had been quoted in the Presidential Address at one of the early meetings of the Indian National Congress. He had heard the quotation as a young steward, and had been deeply impressed. The other hymn he had heard used in South Africa, and the ideal of sacrifice which it enshrines had ever since seemed to him supremely authoritative. He told me also of how, one night many years before that

of India. During the discussion afterwards someone asked him what he, *as a Brahmin*, thought about this or that. The Mahatma's laughter at the suggestion that he was a Brahmin was something to remember!

On his departure he gave great pleasure to our kitchen staff, by making a special pilgrimage down corridors and passages to the kitchen, to say good-bye to them! He left our community simmering with the eager discussion which the challenge of his ideals, and of his way of life, had aroused amongst us. That week-end is fourteen years away now, but we still look back to it as a traveller looks back to a distant peak in the Himalayas from the dusty plains.

Birmingham,  
27-10-1945.

## WHEN GOD TESTED HIM

*Jairamdas Doulatram*

IT occurred nearly seven years ago—in December 1939. Somehow no incident in Bapu's life witnessed by me has been so indelibly imprinted on my memory. There must be a reason for this. But I have failed to discover it. In those days circumstances had led to my remaining in the Sevagram Ashram as a patient under Bapu's personal care. I was paying for my mistakes. And yet I benefited richly from my enforced stay close to Bapu. Among those benefits none was greater than being a witness to the incident I relate.

It was an hour before the evening prayer time. Bapu was going out for his usual stroll. About half a dozen of us were with him. He had hardly stepped out of the Ashram gate, when a visitor who was entering the Ashram stopped six paces in front of Bapu, placed on the ground a bundle of cloth, and reverentially made his pranam. Gandhiji returned the salutation and told the visitor that

subconscious Gandhi was fighting his way through the calculative working of the conscious mind. The battle, silent and unseen, raged intensely for several hours. At last the Great Soul won the struggle. The outer sleep broke at about 2 a.m., and Bapu sat up to make the conscious mind respond to the call of the inner self. There was no peace for him till that response came. And with the response he saw light and knew his next step. The morning prayer over, he addressed the inmates of his Ashram gathered on the prayer ground at that early hour. He put before them all the aspects of the problem which had faced him on the previous evening. He told them how God in the form of Parchure Shastri had come to test his sincerity. For him to turn away Parchure because of his leprosy would be to deny himself and God, but he was at the same time responsible for the health of the Ashramites whom God had placed in his charge. How could he let Parchure live in their proximity unless they all were prepared to run the risk involved? The Ashramites rose to the occasion, and made it clear that they were ready to receive Parchure in their midst. The load was off Bapu's breast. One more experiment with truth, and one more manifestation of ahimsa in its positive form of love to all, even the lowliest, even to one whom the "untouchables" would not touch—this was the meaning of what had happened.

With the dawn Parchure became the inmate of the Ashram. A neat cottage was hurriedly put up close to Bapu's own. The roof consisted of a plain sheet of white khadi to permit the Sun to play its part in the treatment of the new patient. From that day no single individual in the Ashram occupied the mind of Bapu more than Parchure. It was a time when grave issues faced the country. We had broken with the British Government on the war question. Those who had graced ministerial chairs were getting ready to squat on prison floors. Civil disobedience, when and in what form, was being hotly debated within the Congress ranks. Having given up ministerial power, the nation was preparing to use the power of sacrifice to reshape the course of events. But in the midst of this all the leprous wounds of Parchure Shastri loomed large in

which Parchure had become accustomed, did yet flow to the convalescent patient. And how? Bapu with his remarkable forethought, born of ahimsa, had brought with him a fresh orange. Lovingly he gave it to Parchure in token of his affection since his lips could on that day utter no cheering words! You could see how the patient's eyes brightened and the face lit up with pleasure at this unexpected outflow of love. He understood the language of this silent act.

That is Bapu. The smaller the incident, the greater its significance and lesson. How much can we learn from him, and how little we actually do!

Akola,  
25-10-1946.

## MY VISIT TO MAHATMA GANDHI

*Rufus M. Jones*

MY visit to Mahatma Gandhi occurred in 1926. It was to me one of the most thrilling experiences of my life and our conversation together was a memorable experience, but there is very little that I can report in a definite manner. I recited to him two or three of the little stories from *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*. He had never heard these stories before, and they fitted so strikingly into the aims and ideals of his life that he seemed very thankful to have them. It was then that I heard his view expressed that as all the rivers, even the little ones, carry water to the sea, even as the great Ganges itself, so all religions, even those that are less favoured, bear some burden of truth and life and love to men and so are worthy of regard. As I was leaving him I asked him if, after all the agonies and difficulties that had confronted him, he still believed that the way of love would work in this difficult world. He stood up and ran his fingers down his sides and said: "That truth has gone



the details of our training can be easily understood if I tell the readers that, one afternoon at lunch, he systematically taught me how to crush a well-baked chapati into fine powder and prepare a kind of pudding out of it. No work was too insignificant for busy Bapuji.. Sabarmati ashram was a wild place then; one couldn't say it was exactly in a jungle, but it certainly was not far away from it; the ashram ground was covered with shoulder-high grass—or so it seemed to my tiny eyes—infested with snakes and other animals. Tents, huts and other improvised dwelling-houses gave the little commune not very comfortable shelter. Verily Bapuji was giving the inmates practical training in bringing order out of chaos! From clearing the ground for open-air prayers, to digging ditches for movable latrines, there was nothing that he did not personally supervise and actively participate in. His special attention to personal and civic cleanliness, and his insistence on everyone learning and meticulously observing rules of hygiene left a deep and lasting impression on my mind.

Bapu of those early days was much more strict and exacting with his associates than Bapu of today. But his keen sense of humour and his angelic love for children were no less pronounced then. How can I forget how immensely pleased I used to be when at dinner-time he quietly passed a big chunk of raw sugar (gur) to me as a kind of socialistic recognition of 'to everyone according to his needs'; it was notorious that I had a sweet tooth!!

During my teens, I acquired a special position in his heart, and it used to be said by some of the veteran ashramites that he was pampering and completely spoiling Kanti (Gandhiji's grandson) and myself. My elder brother used to tease me by saying that we had learnt the art of 'fooling' Bapuji by observing his impossible discipline and then wringing concessions out of him! Kanti and myself were practically the first inmates in the ashram to learn all the 700 verses of the Gita by heart; we were able to create records in spinning—even in non-stop spinning for twentyfour hours; so on and so forth. Bapuji was much pleased with all this, and I might frankly confess that we were quite conscious of having been "Bapuji's pets". He

that the others felt the same way about the order, but that they were dumb! He challenged me to get the signatures of 70 per cent of the boys to prove my contention. I very nearly accepted; but the next moment I saw no triumph in all this. I therefore pretended to be angry with his demand: I told him frankly that I was tired of arguing with him, that he was always obstinate in his preconceived notions, and that I would accept his challenge only on condition that he would grant my request if the necessary 70 per cent signatures were produced; I was not interested in merely proving my contention. I knew only too well that Bapu the democrat would never reject this condition. Within a couple of days I produced the signatures of 90 per cent of the boys, and the order was rescinded! What a victory! We—mere kids, we had 'convinced' the great Mahatma and brought him round to our view! And when do you think we taxed his time in this unthoughtful manner? It was when the Simon Commission had agitated the whole nation; when Bapuji's advice was sought by politicians of all shades of opinion; and when he was busy studying the Nehru Report on the future constitution of India! But that is how he treats all those who come in contact with him. He has learnt to be patient with the most ignorant, and this has given him the miraculous power of correctly feeling the pulse of the nation.

During the preparatory weeks before he led us as a batch of 80 volunteers to break the salt laws at Dandi, we were given permission to ask questions in public after the evening prayers every day. One evening I asked a moot—and, therefore, perhaps unnecessary—question of him: "Which would you rather have, the Indian mill cloth or the British handmade cloth?" Not willing to waste time over a moot point, he dropped the question and asked me not to raise such unhelpful points. I felt very much hurt at that time, but I received his answer in another form some four years later. It was at the time of his 21 days' fast in the 'Parnakuti' at Poona. I had the proud privilege of being his full-time nurse all through that fast. One day when he saw that the bottle of vaseline which he was using for enema was nearing exhaustion, he asked me to purchase a new one. Critical about every little detail.

my best to wean the villagers from their belief in miracles and supernatural agencies, which, in my opinion, has wrought havoc with India, breaking the very backbone of her culture and civilization. Not for a moment would I subscribe to Gandhiji's view that the Bihar earthquake of 1934 was a divine punishment for the sin of untouchability. But, then, I should be untrue to myself if I did not narrate an incident to which I was an eye-witness and which would appear nothing short of a miracle to a layman.

It was at the time of the Rajkot agitation in 1938 when once again Gandhiji had to resort to a fast. This time also, during his convalescence, I had the privilege of acting as one of the nurses who attended on Gandhiji. Miss Chanduben Parekh, who had just returned from America and who later was to marry my elder brother, was also one of those who helped nursing Gandhiji. The atmosphere, with all the filth that an Indian native State can produce, was extremely tense; the agitation had already assumed all-India proportions; this was very much resented by some of the high-ranking State officials and landlords of the place. They thought they could intimidate the public who were backing the agitation by creating panic among them at the time of open-air prayers which Bapuji used to hold in those days and which were attended by mammoth crowds. They engaged a gang of thug hirelings, and arming them with lathis and batons let them loose on the congregation after the prayers were over. The Congress volunteers, with their usual non-violent methods, tried in vain to hold back the goondas who were now pushing their way towards Gandhiji. Use of sticks made their way clear to Bapuji, who was on his way to the waiting car which used to whisk him off from the admiring crowd after prayers. But on that day, before he could reach the waiting car, the hireling thugs rushed the cordon of Congress volunteers and surrounded him from all sides. I saw the seriousness of the situation; pushing and jostling, shoving and elbowing was producing frayed tempers, and it was a matter of minutes before serious violence would break out. I cannot say how far I could have remained non-violent in the face of danger to Bapuji's person, but I at once plunged into the fray. I elbowed my way close to

But I would not like to call it a miracle. There have been cases where the ablest of mathematicians and engineers have solved the most difficult and complicated problems by sheer intuition; but these are hardly miracles. Intuition after all is an inner directive that flashes into one's mind when it attains a certain critical temperature; it is as though some past experience speaks from within. The incident narrated above only proves that one who leads a life of intensity for some noble cause may bank upon the power of prayer which would enable him to re-live the past struggles and get renewed confidence to march onward to Truth.

What we ashram boys owe to Bapu is beyond calculation. For the last thirty years Bapu's kind but stern hand has tried to mould the precious but plastic youth of us, ashram boys, into a life of duty and dedication. The master engineer has aimed at moulding according to the specifications of his inner voice. But each one of us acquired a shape according to our diverse plasticity of moulding sand. The defects in casting are entirely due to the presence of dry sand in the green mould; the master engineer is in no way responsible for these defects, just as he is not responsible for the loss of stature in the final casting which too is attributable to the plasticity of the material used.

The other day, when I returned from America after my higher studies in engineering and still higher experiences of life extending over five years, I was feeling a little diffident—how foolish it was!—about my reception from Bapu. But the same depth of love and affection was waiting for me when, after landing in Bombay on the Diwali Day of 1945, I went to the Nature Cure Clinic at Poona and once more received his blessings on the Hindu New Year's Day. It indeed was a New Year's Day for me.

Okara (Punjab),  
16-3-1946.

dressed in pants, a long coat, and a black silken cap with a flap behind it as was the fashion in Bengal half a century ago. Gandhiji's mission then was, I think, to ask for Ranade's advice about the political struggle into which Gandhiji had decided to enter in South Africa.

I next had correspondence with Gandhiji when in 1912-13 I, as the editor of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*, raised and sent him a sum of rupees five thousand as Maharashtra's contribution to the fund, started at the instance of the late Mr. G. K. Gokhale as a means of helping Gandhiji's struggle.

I met Gandhiji face to face once again in 1916 at Belgaum where he happened to be present, at the time when a conference of Tilak's Home Rule League was assembled. I saw him and his son (was it Devadas I wonder?) eating, at about 6 p.m., their evening meal of rice cooked with their own hands, in the rooms in which he was lodged by his Belgaum host. I could not but be impressed with his great simplicity, as I knew the ways of living of our political leaders from Pherozshah Mehta downwards.

But Gandhiji was yet to be counted among Indian political leaders. For, in that very year 1916, I saw what place Gandhiji occupied among Congress circles at the annual session of the Congress at Lucknow. Here I saw Gandhiji twice or thrice in the Tilak Camp, having come himself or at the invitation of Tilak to hold conversations with him on the great topic of the proposed Congress-League scheme of political reforms. Here at Lucknow Tilak was the acknowledged hero of the hour as he had recently returned from Mandalay, and successfully carried out his great strategical move of stooping to enter the Congress only to capture or conquer it.

Here at Lucknow one could see that Gandhiji was somewhat disliked by the group of Bombay Moderates on account of his advocacy of such an unconstitutional method of political agitation as passive resistance. I think I met him several times at the rooms of the Bombay Presidency Association where N. M. Samarth dominated the young group of Mehta's followers and pronounced his antipathy to passive resistance. At the Lucknow Congress when the

humility and in a reverent attitude by Tilak, who had expired already, and after a ceremonious salutation left in such silence that even his foot-fall could not be heard.

After Tilak's death we all began to watch Gandhiji's movements, as we could see that, though at the Amritsar Congress he was content to play the part of a Moderate, he had secured a hold on the leaders of the Congress, and it was rumoured that his next whim was going to be to set up non-cooperation as a new weapon in the political warfare. Tilak had already warned his party against the Gandhian cult of non-cooperation and non-violence. But the politically-minded masses in India were hankering for some change in the method of political agitation. The storm was brewing for some time till it burst at last at the Special Congress Session in September, 1920 at Calcutta. The Gujarat and the Hindi Provinces worked for and secured a majority in favour of Gandhiji. And since then he remains at the head of the political movement, unvarying in his influence, though fitful in moods and even inconsistent in his conduct.

Sometime in 1920 I had the privilege of putting up Gandhiji as my guest for a day. He had then no followers in Poona. My friend Harilal Phatak secured goat's milk for Gandhiji, and took him afterwards for a stay at Sinhagad.

In 1921 and 1922 I met Gandhiji from time to time very frequently as I was a member of the Congress Working Committee.

I have met Gandhiji a number of times during his famous feats of fasting. I did not give him the trouble of uttering any words to greet me, but I watched him from a distance just to let him know that I had cared for him. Fasting was one of the many acts of this extraordinary personality which earned for him a world-wide fame. For who in this world could have conceived of the use of fasting as a means of political agitation? Many a time did he sit down to a fast-unto-death, but on all these occasions he could be induced at last to give up his fast. Perhaps like the cat in the saying, Gandhiji had nine lives. But abnormal things of various kind have entered into his life. Apart from the fast, his manner of dress also is abnormal. And

Mr. Broomfield's face had faded. A hectic pallor had taken its place. Neither the natural correctness of conduct nor the consciousness of prestige could keep off the creeping nervousness from him. For once in his official life a Civilian English Sessions Judge nodded respectful salutation to a native in the dock before he himself took his seat on the Bench. For once were the judicial words of a penal sentence belied by the tributary words of human admiration. "Would I not rather sit at your feet and learn a little of your nobility than send you to jail for six years?"—words like these might easily have come from the inner lips of Mr. Broomfield when he stole a parting glimpse of Mahatma Gandhi.

The apologetic Advocate-General obviously felt quite out of his element in conducting that State-trial. There was no tangled skein of a secret plot which his skill should unravel in the opening address. He felt the mockery of leading evidence where everything was avowed and admitted. He winced at reading the articles charged, as every word in them was a bold indictment of the Government he represented, and left some unanswerable reproach sticking to the reader's soul, in spite of his assumed professional scornful manner. He regretfully missed the contentious opposition which he delights to meet in the law court every day, as it provides good sport for the keen file of his intellect or legal acumen. For once perhaps did Mr. Advocate-General also feel that the fat fees he would charge were simply wasted on him.

And what shall I say of the accused himself? Clad only in a khadi enlargement of the proverbial fig-leaf, there was Mahatma Gandhi, with submission to none and yet with goodwill to all, the grand accused, whom it was Mr. Broomfield's rare privilege to try and judge. When he was brought from the jail to the court-house his guard looked more like an escort of honour. With his nimble feet he stepped into the court-room, and with one universal smile he at once shed a halo of the holy spirit of the blessed passive resister upon the whole assembly, from which even his prosecutors could not extricate themselves. But I doubt whether they really did not like to share in that glory. The accused was not only

into the living present by one key-word. There must be surely some magic charm in a sentence of six years' imprisonment that it should be regarded by Government as an effective amulet for the salvation of India, and two heroes like these—Tilak and Gandhi—should accept it as such in terms and spirit. Yes, by common consent imprisonment of six years for men like these could certainly do much to cure India of its present maladies!

I wonder if Mr. Broomfield did not leave the court with a secret feeling of self-reproach. Mr. Advocate-General was happier for not being elevated to the Bench, for he could actually shake hands with the accused, and thus earn the needed atonement for even such small animus as might remain to his debit, after the remarkably fair and even gentle treatment he had given to the Mahatma and his co-accused. And the police officers in attendance for once felt completely floored. Their usual fussy business of looking after a convict this day was gone. They need not hurry him out, and they would not have done it even if they could. With the disappearance of the judge and the Advocate-General from the court-room, the assembly was turned into a social gathering, the police being simply ignored.

And then commenced the re-enactment of a scene with which I had been familiar for about a couple of years before. There was Mahatmaji sitting in the centre with a *melee* of men, women and children engrossed in talking to Mahatmaji and being talked to by him in return, with all the welcome, because enjoyable, interventions of wit, wisdom and repartee. I heard Mahatmaji affectionately chaffing a young dandy of five years on wearing a suit of foreign cloth and a fashionable neck-tie. He mildly reproached an old title-hunter advising him to get rid of his habit at least at that ripe age. By silent inspiration of courage he arrested the tears before they could moisten, and in his opinion tarnish, the eyes of some affectionate follower here; and to another there, more stern and practical, he could give a useful hint for further strenuous work allotted to him. The ladies felt caressed by his blessings, and the men felt they got a gift of strength by shaking his supple but saintly hands.



speeches or issue statements in furtherance of it. And there was hardly a week when it was not vigorously criticised in the *Servant of India*, the principal weekly English organ of the Society. I was comparatively young, and loved occasionally to barb my shafts. The note on the "Violence of Non-violence" gave particular offence to many an admirer of the Mahatma. But he himself, so I am told, read the stuff in forgiving sorrow and not in resentful anger. He was supremely understanding.

#### "SHOW-VILLAGES"

But once I seem to have done the incredible: ruffled the temper of the Mahatma! My Chief, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, wrote to me from Delhi that it was the first time that he saw the Mahatma in anything like temper. It occurred during the Gandhi-Irwin parleys. Mr. Sastri was using his good offices. It was said against the Government at the time that in order to escape its oppression, the inhabitants of several villages in Gujarat had deserted them and migrated to the more hospitable Indian States like Baroda. I had toured the area. It was reported to the Mahatma that I had discounted the stories of evacuation of villages and had called the villages to which I was conducted as "show villages". He asked Mr. Sastri to call for an explanation from me. I responded, and he was satisfied.

#### HARIJAN MOVEMENT FROM PRISON

Towards the end of 1932 the Mahatma decided to conduct his Harijan campaign from the Yeravda prison. He sent for me to see him in the prison. He dictated a message and asked me to give it the widest publicity through the news agencies and otherwise. I saw him almost every day for some weeks as his publicity agent. Gradually a regular office, with an adequate staff of stenographers, was established in the prison itself. Even when my services were no longer necessary as his publicity agent, the Mahatma extended to me the privilege of calling on him in prison or outside, whenever I wished. I was a fairly constant caller, but I rarely took part in any serious discussions. In prison he very severely restricted the discussions to the Harijan question, and if anybody, however

Mahatma's presence in the prison. To my utter discomfiture and consternation, the Mahatma told her that I was the informant! Then he asked me to examine her and let him have a report. I protested against the assignment; I had no right to probe into her affairs; I should be guilty of unpardonable impertinence. He was unmoved. He was in search of truth; it was at his instance and for his sake that I should undertake the unpleasant task, and no blame attached to me. N pitied my plight and came to my rescue; she volunteered her explanations; she denied the allegations. All that she had done was that she acted in India as she would have acted in her own country where her conduct would not have offended the proprieties; she had failed to make allowances for the different social environment in India. That was all. I told the Mahatma that without further and elaborate investigations I could form no opinion. He agreed that it was very difficult to judge persons. But from such examination as he made, he came to the conclusion that she was the innocent victim of malicious propaganda. My humiliation was complete. I hated myself as never I did. I apologised to N and said to myself: Never again. The ways of the Mahatma were mysterious and mystifying.

That was not the end. A few weeks later I was summoned again, and the Mahatma told me that he was, on further cross-examination, convinced of the truth of the allegations, and thanked me for my first warning! Soon after he went on another fast, and this time because all his instruments in the Harijan work were not "pure".

In the meanwhile, S had returned. Both she and N were now staying in the Servants of India Society's Home in Poona, at the instance of the Mahatma. When the news of the fast arrived, both N and S got, naturally enough, frightfully excited. N accused herself as the cause of the Mahatma's fast, and begged him not to risk his precious life for her sake; she would go through any ordeal he prescribed for her; she asked to stay with him during his fiery ordeal. But the Mahatma ordained that she should leave Poona at once, and she did.

S was furious with the Mahatma for undertaking the fast for a person not worth saving. If he did not desist

resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before I got the essay of Thoreau on Civil Disobedience. But the movement was then known as Passive Resistance. As it was incomplete I had coined the word Satyagraha for the Gujarati readers. When I saw the title of Thoreau's great essay, I began to use his phrase to explain our struggle to the English readers. But I found that even Civil Disobedience failed to convey the full meaning of the struggle. I, therefore, adopted the phrase Civil Resistance. Non-violence was always an integral part of our struggle."

#### THE CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri was a member of the Indian Delegation to the Round Table Conference between the Governments of India and South Africa in 1926-27, which resulted in the Cape Town Agreement. The Agreement was a compromise. Before he left South Africa in 1914, Mahatma Gandhi had agreed to the principle of voluntary repatriation of Indians. In the Cape Town Agreement the Government of India became a party to it, but in a form less offensive to Indian sentiment. On the other hand, the South African Government agreed, wholly contrary to its avowed policy, to uplift Indians settled permanently in South Africa and see that they did not lag behind any other community. This might be interpreted to mean equality with the White community. Taking the two parts together, the Cape Town Agreement was a diplomatic triumph for India.

But would public opinion in India share that view? The non-cooperation movement was at its height, and no 'patriotic' Indian might openly approve of anything which the 'Satanic' Government of India did. The Cape Town Agreement was, in its very nature, an Agreement between the Governments of India and South Africa, and neither Government was *persona grata* with public opinion in India. The danger was real that, without reference to merits, the Agreement would be denounced out of hand. It stood a chance of being accepted by India if it had the approval of the Mahatma, not only because of his influence with Indian public opinion but also because he was an expert on the question of Indians in South Africa.

## PRATHAM DARSHAN

*J. B. Kripalani*

IT was in the February of 1915. Gandhiji had come to Shantiniketan. The inmates of the 'Phoenix', as his ashram in South Africa was called, had preceded him there. He himself had gone from South Africa to England. He was now in India, and with his near and dear ones at Shantiniketan. How the Phoenix party came to be in Shantiniketan has been related by Gandhiji himself in his autobiography. I had some kind of connection with the Poet's institution. I had put my nephew, Shri Girdhari Kripalani, for his education there. I was a professor in the Arts College at Muzzafarpur (Bihar). Bihar in those days, though a separate province, was in the matter of higher education under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University.

At this time Kaka Kalelkar, then known as Brahmachari Dattatreya, was at Shantiniketan. He had attached himself to the institution as a teacher. He was an old friend. We were fellow-students in Fergusson College, Poona, in the year 1907. Here our lifelong connection began. He had informed me that Mr. Gandhi, the South African Indian leader, was shortly expected at Shantiniketan. Whenever I had a short holiday, I went to the Poet's ashram to see Girdhari and to know how he was progressing in his studies. The Poet's presence was, of course, a great attraction. I was also interested in the new experiment in education that he was making. In spite of my profession I was interested in politics. This interest went back to the Bengal partition days. I was an undergraduate then. After my graduation I had served in several educational institutions. I had to leave them either myself or through the action of the authorities. In either case it was for political reasons.

In 1914 political life in India was at a low ebb. The 1907 split at Surat had left the Congress impoverished by the withdrawal from it of its most active youthful and revolutionary elements. The Congress thereafter failed to inspire, enthuse or educate the people. It was a body without a soul. The Government had effectively suppress-

appeared to me rather generous. As a Sindhi I knew that fresh fruit could be taken in some quantities without much harm. But I had never seen a middle class educated Indian making a heavy meal of nuts, especially of such oily nuts as *badams* and *pistas*. However, it appeared that he was eating with appetite and apparent satisfaction, for he was masticating his food well and taking a considerable time over his meal. He insisted upon my being his guest instead of the Poet's as, he said, I had on that occasion come especially to see him. I readily consented. Having lived in several provinces I had completely shed all provincial prejudices about food. The plain, unspiced and unseasoned food of Gandhiji's establishment at Shantiniketan did not, therefore, frighten me. It must be remembered that the Phoenix party at Bolpur lived their own life apart from the life of Shantiniketan. They had been assigned separate quarters. They cooked their own meals and carried out their own daily routine, as they had done in South Africa.

This was my first interview with Gandhiji. After that I met him every day, for about a week, till he left for Calcutta. But what a week! If it had been merely a week of political talks, it might not have meant much in those days. But in this week I was privileged to see his reforming zeal at work. He seemed to have taken the land of the lotus-eaters, as Shantiniketan has often been called, by storm. In spite of the personality of the Poet, the enthusiasm of the teachers and the taught, and the atmosphere of joyous freedom, Gandhiji found many essential things neglected at Shantiniketan. He was already on intimate terms with most of the teachers. He had made himself quite at home with the young pupils; and in those days the pupils at Shantiniketan were very young indeed. The institution imparted education only up to the high school standards. The college classes were introduced long after, and so also was the Visvabharati section. Even as a high school, Shantiniketan was not affiliated to the Calcutta University as now. Its pupils appeared for their matriculation examination through some of the affiliated institutions.

Gandhiji's attention was soon drawn to the Ashram

work done by the inmates of the ashram, teachers and pupils.

It would not be out of place here to give my first impressions of Gandhiji. They are even today vivid in my memory. What struck me most was the intensity of his character. He appeared to be a man who could, if need be, stand alone, provided he was convinced that the course of action he was following was the right one. He would not be deterred by the favours of friends or the frowns of opponents. Gandhiji was austere and puritanic. But he was not censorious. He denied himself many things. But he did not interfere with the legitimate enjoyment of others to convince himself of his moral superiority. His non-violence was not negative. This was clear from his love for the poor and the downtrodden. This love was neither merely intellectual nor sentimental or romantic. It was deep and abiding, and it manifested itself in appropriate conduct and action. One could see that Gandhiji was not merely patronising the poor but was trying to live like them and feel one with them.

As for his political views, they appeared to me to be all wrong. He was under the spell of the Moderates as the Indian Liberals were called by their opponents in those days. He had been greatly impressed by the personality of Gokhale who had become his dear friend. Gokhale had helped him in his work in South Africa. Gandhiji called him his political *guru*. This was natural. In spite of Gandhiji's new technique of political action against injustice, his attitude in those days towards the British Government in India was essentially the same as that of the Moderates. He did not go so far as to say that British rule in India was a Divine Dispensation, but he was convinced that the sum total of British activities in India was for the benefit of India. This view appeared to me to be justified neither by history nor by contemporary facts. But in spite of my youth I was not bothered about Gandhiji's misreading of facts, historical and contemporary. What I was concerned about was the man's character. I clearly perceived that he was a man who meant business, and when once convinced that a particular course of action was correct he would stick to it and follow it,

## THE GREAT EXPERIMENTER

*Bharatan Kumarappa*

THE first time I had anything to do with Gandhiji was in 1929 when I was in London as a student, and my brother, J. C. Kumarappa, was at the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, working within reach of Gandhiji who lived then at Sabarmati, a mile or two away. My brother had been converted to khadi, but I could see no sense in hand-spinning. I believed that to make our country prosperous we should adopt efficient methods of production such as Britain, America, Germany, Japan and Russia had done, and certainly not the outmoded spinning wheel. I therefore wrote angry letters to my brother saying that Gandhiji was doing no end of harm to India by reviving hand-spinning, which would only keep the country poor. My brother showed my letters to Gandhiji. Gandhiji's message to me was characteristic. He said that he would be glad to see me on my return, that as soon as I came back I should start work along my own lines to make India prosperous, and that if I succeeded, he would be my first disciple. This, I am sure, he did not say in defiance, but in all sincerity as an experimenter with Truth; for through my long contact with him since, I know that Gandhiji's is the experimental mind which says: "This method of mine whether theoretically correct or not works, and I will stick to it till I can find one which works better." He is essentially a man of action, who is not misled by theorising. He wants to be shown results before he will accept any nice-sounding idea. Besides, it is a way of his with people who come to him with beautiful plans, to get them to put their schemes into operation themselves; for it is after all they who understand their scheme best, and may be expected to have sufficient enthusiasm for it to overcome initial obstacles. Moreover, only by working out a scheme can one get to know all its implications in full. It may be thought, however, that since almost every mail brings Gandhiji long letters from people who tell him what they think he should do or not do for this or that purpose, he has, probably out of sheer surfeit of such advice, adopted the easy course of saying: "I go my way. If you think

the colour of mud and tasted much like what it looked! The next time some groundnut was put into it to make it less forbidding. Another experiment was with oil-cake. We were extracting oil in Maganvadi with the bullock-driven oil-press. Oil cake was said to have valuable nutritive properties. So Gandhiji thought, why not see if 'tasty' dishes could be made out of it for human consumption? We were, therefore, served oil-cake 'chutney' made with *dahi* (curd). Garlic is reputed to have antiseptic qualities when eaten raw. Gandhiji tried large quantities himself, and gave it to whoever would eat it. The result was soon everybody round him stank of garlic. Lately it was reported in the papers that ordinary grass had plenty of vitamins and made a perfect food for human beings. Fortunately, however, the discovery was not made when Gandhiji was still with us in Maganvadi, for then he might have decided to wind up the kitchen and ask us to graze on the lawn! All of us used to be weighed regularly every two weeks, and our weights reported to him. I expect his interest was to see how we fared on his experimental diet.

He depended on diet as his chief remedy for disease. Disease gave him a vast field for experiment. He delighted treating patients. He would listen very carefully to all their complaints, enquire in detail about their diet, and prescribe to the last ounce what they should eat or drink, and when. Reports had to come to him regarding each patient before the next food was prescribed, and often he saw himself that every item of the food was in order and in the right proportion before he allowed the tray to be taken in. His interest in his patients was so great that he would visit them morning and evening, and would hate to be separated from them even by important political work with the Viceroy. He would rush back to their bedside as though they were infants to be nursed by no one but him.

An experimental mind is always open and ready to make a change when necessary. Whether Gandhiji agreed with you or not, he always listened intently and reflectively when you criticised him or made a suggestion to him to change his procedure. This did not mean of course that he did whatever people told him. When he was convinced of the rightness of his course, he was as



tention that non-violence of the strong knows no defeat. It is always victorious.

Another supreme case of Gandhiji's non-violence in relation to me was when he wanted me for a particular type of work. I said that I would consider the proposition. Soon, however, I decided against it and told him so. He did not like my decision. But he did not try to persuade me to change it. He said that he would like me to help, but if I felt that I would be happier doing something else, he would certainly not stand in my way. I should feel perfectly free to follow my own inclinations and in just the manner I pleased. These were practically his words. He gave me free reins, but this only bound me closer to him. Again the triumph of non-violence which ruled by refusing to rule.

If there was anything to be done, there was for Gandhiji no waiting for an opportune time. It had to be done immediately. He advised village workers to take to scavenging in order to keep the village clean. They said that, if they did scavenging, they lost all status and influence with the people of the village, so that they could not do any other work there. But Gandhiji would not listen. He said, First things first. Where there was dirt, it had to be removed and at once. There was no such thing as waiting for a later time to remove dirt. Following his own advice, he carried a bucket and shovel when he went for a walk from Maganvadi every morning, or those accompanying him carried them for him, and with his own hand he would shovel into the bucket any dirt or human excreta lying on the roadside, and bring it home to be converted into manure.

Believing as he does, like our seers of old, in simplifying life, Gandhiji reduces his wants to a minimum. I walked in once into his room when he was getting ready for a shave. He did not have any soap or brush but only a crude country razor. No foreign razors for him. I asked him how he could shave without soap. He said that soap was quite unnecessary, water served the purpose when rubbed into the face. I thought this was carrying things a little too far, and that you could not really have a proper

not be used for providing comforts to people who were journeying at public cost. The Government, however, was adamant; if ultimately he yielded and permitted a Special to be provided for him, it was because he was told that the Railway could not afford to have ordinary trains detained for several hours on the way, and that such delay caused other passengers and the Railway great inconvenience. So thereafter we had to travel by special trains.

During the journey, whenever the train stopped at stations, he collected money for the Harijan Fund. People often underwent torture to get through the crowd to place money in his hand. They pushed their way through, and in the process got crushed, or tore their clothes, or lost their chappals. Still they persisted till they could reach his outstretched hand. It often happened that just as someone was at the point of placing money in his hand, and Gandhiji was bending his utmost to take the gift, holding on to the window sill to prevent himself from falling out, the crowd would push and the gift receded. He would laugh like a child heartily enjoying the fun, and taking up the challenge he would stretch his hand out all the more till he secured the money with evident glee. At one station in Andhra, I noticed a woman holding in her hand a pair of gold bangles and trying hard to get to him. She struggled for well over five minutes although she was within a few feet of where he stood. At times she was pushed towards him, at times away from him. She could make little progress and seemed in great distress. In the meantime Gandhiji went off to the other side of the compartment to give *darshan* to the throngs who demanded his presence there. The woman, however, continued to struggle to get to within reach of his window, thinking that he might still come back to it. On seeing this, I spoke to him about her and brought him back. But just as she was pushing through desperately, the train whistled and started off. She made one last frantic effort, but was mercilessly pushed back by the police. And there she stood on the platform, disconsolate and weeping, with the gold bangles still in her hand. For most of us, to give is no pleasure; to this woman as to thousands of poor people,

the name of God. When one witnessed it, one felt that here was the next crucial step towards which Gandhiji unknown to himself was pointing, viz. to organise and weld the nation into a united whole. This is the task to which he is now devoting himself, especially in the way of bringing about understanding and unity between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhiji's prophetic soul is once more giving the lead. It is up to the nation to follow if it is to enjoy the freedom, now within its reach. Nay more. This oneness he is today striving for is not only for us in India but also for Asia and for the whole war-worn world. His aim is that by establishing unity and concord between the various communities within her borders, India should win the rest of the world to ways of love and peace. He is, therefore, not prompted by any narrow patriotism. Nationalism in his case has for its basis true internationalism or genuine desire to help establish peace on earth and goodwill among men.

Bombay,  
8-4-1947.

## LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE

*J. C. Kumarappa*

### 1. OUR MEETING

**I**N the year 1929 I returned from the United States where I had made a study of public finance, and wrote out the story of the British exploiting India through their taxation policy in the form of an essay. It was suggested that I should publish this. I was negotiating with some of the publishers in India in this regard when I was told that the subject was one in which Gandhiji would be intensely interested, and I was urged to submit the manuscript to him first. At that time Gandhi was merely a name to me. It was hardly associated with any definite ideas. The

stick and standing akimbo was watching, as there were still ten minutes for the appointment. This old man after about five minutes opened his toothless lips, and with a smile on his face enquired if I was Kumarappa. It suddenly dawned on me that my questioner might be no other than Mahatma Gandhi. So I, in my turn, asked him if he was Gandhiji; and when he nodded I promptly sat down on the cow-dunged floor regardless of the well-kept crease of my silk trousers! Seeing me sitting without stretched legs, more or less in a reclining position, someone from the house came rushing down with a chair for me, and Gandhiji asked me to get up and sit in the chair more comfortably. I replied that since he was seated on the floor I did not propose to take the chair.

Gandhiji told me that he was interested in the essay I had written, and that he proposed to publish that in a series in his journal *Young India*. Then he enquired if I would undertake a rural survey for him in Gujarat, as he found that the approach that I had to economics was almost exactly the same as his, and that I was about the first student of economics he had come across with that same viewpoint. I raised the difficulty of language, but he quickly got over that by saying that he would place the professors of economics of the Gujarat Vidyapith with all their students at my disposal to help me with the survey, and suggested that I go and see the Vice-Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Kaka Kalelkar, who, Gandhiji informed me, was the very person who came running down the steps with a chair for me!

In the afternoon I went to the Gujarat Vidyapith to see Kaka Kalelkar. Seeing that I was a young man dressed in the most fashionable Western style, Kakasaheb did not feel that I would fit into the sort of work that Gandhiji wanted me to do, and he made my ignorance of Gujarati to be a great handicap and discouraged me. I got into a huff and, even without taking leave of Gandhiji, returned to Bombay, and wrote to him that I should be glad to help him with any work that he wanted done, and reported that Kakasaheb did not feel that I could be of any use. By return post I got back a letter from Kakasaheb to say

any work in that line I would gladly undertake, and asked him to spare me from doing any writing work. Then Gandhiji replied: "As regards your qualifications to write, I, as the Editor of the paper, have to sit in judgment and not you, and, therefore, I invite you to write to this paper. We have the tradition of publishing the name of the writer under each article. If you write any trash, the public will say Mahatma Gandhi's paper publishes trash. But if you write anything that is appreciated, they will give all credit to this Kumarappa who is writing in Gandhiji's paper." This presentation of the appeal was irresistible. It was then I promised Gandhiji that I would send some articles as soon as I heard that he had been arrested. (It may here be stated that as the events came about, Mahadevbhai was arrested before Gandhiji, and later when Gandhiji was arrested I was required not only to contribute articles to *Young India* but to take up its editorial charge.) This incident indicates the masterly way in which Gandhiji makes his appeal irresistible.

### 3. POT-WASHING

Gandhiji's sense of humour often saves the temper of people around him. When he finds danger coming ahead he immediately brings the ludicrous into play, and thus glances off at a tangent and avoids friction.

When the All India Village Industries Association was formed Gandhiji came to live with us at Maganvadi so as to be on the spot to guide the policy of the Association. One of our rules at that time was that everyone should take part in all our daily activities. This included washing of heavy kitchen utensils coated with soot and dirt. One day it fell to Gandhiji's lot to clean the kitchen pots. I was his partner. So we both sat down together, near the well, with cocoanut fibre in our hands, and ashes and mud by our side, and we were scrubbing the black stuff off.

Suddenly, Kasturba Gandhi appeared on the scene. She could not tolerate the sight of the great Mahatma with his hands up to the elbow in dirt. She watched him for a few minutes and burst out in Gujarati, telling Gandhiji that this was no work for a person like him, and that he ought to be engaged in better work. In a rage she asked

sanction for every trip that the cars made. Naturally all these restrictions caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction. When Gandhiji came I suggested to Mahadevbhai that they should obtain their own supply of petrol for themselves, and disallowed Gandhiji's bills in regard to food and motor car travel. When this was reported to Gandhiji he was a little puzzled. He sent for me and said: "I am coming all the way to Patna to help with the relief work. It is my one and only object in coming to Patna. That being so I fail to see why you should not debit my expenses to the Relief Committee." I explained to him my delicate position where I was faced on one side with checking the expenses of thousands of volunteers. Even an increase of an anna per day would involve the Relief Committee in lacs of rupees in the course of our work and, therefore, I suggested that Gandhiji should bear his own expenses so that they would not stand in contrast to the austere life I was suggesting to the volunteers and would also check the extravagant use of motor travel. Gandhiji appreciated my point, and told Mahadevbhai that not a pice was to be charged to the Bihar Relief on his account. He was willing to subject himself to the discipline that the administration called for, even though his rights arising out of duty done would have given him the right to claim for the expenses incurred in the execution of his work. This mode of submission to rules requires a great deal of humility and wise understanding of the situation, taking into consideration the difficulties of those who are engaged in the field work.

Similarly, early in 1947, when I was invited by the Congress President to become a member of his Working Committee, Gandhiji wrote to me, saying that he would be happy to watch my career in this new responsibility that had been placed on me, thus in a sense giving me his approval to take up the membership of the Working Committee. He had written this after seeing the reports in the newspapers. I immediately replied and said that one of the rules of the All India Village Industries Association, of which I was the Secretary, required us not to take part in politics, and if we wished to do so, we had to resign from the All India Village Industries Association. I pointed out that my life-work was connected with the

replied: "The view may be strictly correct, but though we may be innocent as doves, we have also got to be wise as serpents, and we should not attempt the impossible. Knowing the personnel as I do, I feel that it would be merely dashing one's head against a wall." To this Gandhiji replied: "This is not the approach of a satyagrahi. You must give your opponent the fullest chance, and when the time comes that your position in the committee will not serve any purpose, you can always resign and come away. Having done your part in good faith you will have done your duty, and it will then become your duty to resign and not to waste your time. The time that you spend in trying to satisfy yourself and your fellow-members will not be wasted. It will develop you and widen your range of view; and, therefore, I suggest that you go and attend the committee meetings until such time when your work would prove to be futile. Then you can with a clean conscience resign and come away." With this advice I went and worked with the National Planning Committee, and remained on the Committee for about three months. Afterwards, finding that they were driven into all forms of discussions which would not benefit the country, I got Gandhiji's permission to resign and get away.

This shows that the duty of a satyagrahi is limitless in regard to extending co-operation to whosoever calls for it, and it is wrong for one who wishes to lead the life of a satyagrahi to prejudge anybody.

## 6. THE DOCTOR

The kaleidoscopic variety of activities that Gandhiji indulges in cover practically all professions, and his contributions are by no means mean. He calls himself a quack where the medical profession is concerned, but it has not yet been decided whether the professionals are quacks or Gandhiji. He brings to bear on the case before him profound wisdom and commonsense which often outwit the technical advantages that the professionals have.

Some years ago when it was discovered that I was suffering from blood pressure, the reason for the malady was to be ascertained. I was taken to Bombay to be examined by some of the best doctors. I was thoroughly

in the afternoon. Combining this with a regulation of the diet so that digestion and brain work do not go together, you should be able to control your blood pressure more or less completely."

I took Gandhiji's treatment as being scientific both in regard to diagnosis and in regard to treatment, and have followed his instructions carefully for the last seven years, with the result that excepting when this regime is upset by unforeseen circumstances the plan has worked satisfactorily.

In the same way his approach to the various ailments is both simple and efficacious. He looks upon disease as caused by man's deviation from Nature's ways, and his attempt is to bring back our life into alignment with the requirements of Nature. This should be the aim of every physician.

#### 7. THE COMPASSIONATE

A few years ago when he was staying at Maganvadi a young man about 17 or 18 years of age appeared before him suffering from St. Vitus' dance which is a nervous disorder (choria) making the sufferer unable to control the shaking of his hands and feet. The young man said to Gandhiji that he found life heavy on him as he was unable to be of any use to anybody. So he requested Gandhiji to let him stay with him. Gandhiji told him that it was impossible for him, as he was situated, to take charge of every disabled person, and therefore he must seek elsewhere for shelter. But the young man was adamant, and would not go away under any circumstances. He sat down on the steps and remained there from morning till evening. One of Gandhiji's party reported to him in the evening that the young man was still sitting at the door-step, and suggested that he should be sent away. Gandhiji turned round and said: "If I turn him away, whom will he go to? Let him stay, and I shall consider how best to utilise him."

The result was, the young man stayed, and he was put on by Gandhiji to do some work which the shaking of his hands and feet would not prevent him from doing reasonably satisfactorily. Of course he could not card or spin, but he was asked to wash vegetables and help in the kitchen



Gandhiji. He is ever experimenting though not in an elaborately equipped laboratory. Changes in his food are often dictated by the desire to find out something new. At Maganvadi we have a number of neem trees. So he started taking about ten tolas of neem leaves ground down to a paste, to find the effect it has on health. One day at the midday meal I was seated to Gandhiji's right and Sardar Vallabhbhai to his left. As Gandhiji was going to gormandize on 'the neem chutney', he took out a spoonful and placed it for me on my 'thali'. The Sardar was watching this parental act. Then he winked at me cynically and said: "You see, Kumarappa, Bapu started with drinking goat's milk, and now he has come to goat's food!"

Calcutta,  
24-12-1947.

### GANDHIJI : 1926-39

*Muriel Lester*

SOON after World War I an English translation of a book by Romain Rolland fell into my hands which in his matchless phraseology described the principles, the practice and the life of M. K. Gandhi, an Indian up till then almost unknown to English folk. That book marked a new epoch for me. The teaching was quite familiar to any lover of the Gospels, but here was a man who took their great principles as his personal programme for day-by-day living and called upon his fellow-countrymen to base their national aspirations upon the same eternal truths: God's love for man: man's need for God: the necessity of prayer, of unlimited forgiveness, of patience, of menial service, of self-giving and of practising the presence of God.

A few years later, in 1926, on reaching India I found one of his characteristic post cards awaiting me. It said

you discovered yet what Gandhi means to us, young men, whose spirits were fired by a passion for India's freedom but who saw no hope of gaining it except through violence? Some had joined secret bands. If the lot fell on them, they would have to throw the bomb. They were doing violence to their own souls in trying to save their country. They were tormented by inner conflicts. They were always in danger, always on the alert, learning how to lie and deceive and hate. Imagine our lifelong gratitude when Gandhiji showed us that the way to freedom lay through truth and openness, through humble honest service, through identifying oneself with the poor, through creative work and mutual forgiveness."

An English magistrate, seeing I had only just arrived in India, said one night at dinner: "Do you want to know what Gandhi has done for India? Ten years ago, if a coolie had suddenly crossed my path and frightened the horse I was riding, I would probably have sworn at him and shouted: 'Get out of the way—you!' He would have cowered before me and disappeared. Now I should not shout at a coolie like that. But if I did, he wouldn't disappear. He'd stand facing me with complete assurance, look me full in the face, and politely enquire: 'Why should I move?'"

The Indian National Congress was at Gauhati that year (1926). Between sessions I could see what the non-politicals, the non-Hindus, the common folk felt about him. These peasants had walked, some of them thirty miles throughout the night; they stood for hours all round Gandhiji's lodgings, watching for the *darshan* of him as he passed in and out. There was no cheering, no talking, no gossiping. They just stood, in a reverent attitude, and waited.

Circumstances were very different five years later when I had the honour of entertaining him for ten weeks at Kingsley Hall, Bow, during the Round Table Conference in London. Of course he had crowds of other homes offered to him. The hospitality offered by King George to the delegates was the opposite of ours. It had a view over Hyde Park, servants by the dozen, comfortable furniture,

must seek nothing for himself, neither power, position nor pleasure. And he must remember God twentyfour hours a day. I have no power except what God gives me. Look at me. A boy of fifteen could fell me with a blow. I am nothing. But I have become detached from fear and desire, so that I know something of God's power. I tell you, if all the world were to deny God, I should be His sole witness. It is a continual miracle to me."

Next time I saw him, there was again a very different situation. It was in 1936, and he was lying between life and death. Even then he was master of the situation. I remember that it was he who had to comfort Mahadev at the moment when death was expected.

Then came the winter of '38 and '39 when I found him, renewed in strength after his time with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan on the North-West Frontier, rejuvenated by the arrival of his old friend, Herman Kallenbach, from South Africa. The two of them did everything together. They reminded me of a couple of school boys.

During the war I feared that he might become tired of the constant struggle against ignorance and pride and greed, which seemed to fill his life; but the other day the news reached us in London that Gandhiji was hoping to live to be a hundred. That seemed to many of us of good augury. It strengthened our faith in the future of our poor world.

I heard Bapuji say: "I am not struggling for the freedom of India because I happen to think it's a good idea but because I know it's the will of God that every nation should be free. Otherwise they cannot make their maximum contribution to the rest of the world."

The following conversation took place during his visit to Switzerland in 1931:

"What do you think of Europe, Mr. Gandhi?" asked Pierre Ceresole.

Gandhi answered: "I see no signs of great leadership in Europe."

"What do you mean by God, Mr. Gandhi?"

"Truth is God, and the way to Him is non-violence. The slopes of the Himalaya mountains are white with the bleached bones of the sages and hermits and rishis who

In the second week-end, it was hoped, we might arrange an informal meeting between him and two or three English statesmen interested in India, but the main purpose was to give him quiet and leisure. So he came with C. F. Andrews and Miss Slade and his son and various other friends, about a dozen in all. Mr. Gandhi, his son, his secretary and Miss Slade stayed with us in our house. We also had to find room for two enormous policemen whom the Government sent to see that Mr. Gandhi should not be molested by anybody.

The two week-ends were spent differently. During the first Mr. Gandhi saw various societies and interested groups in Oxford. Had I seen Mr. Gandhi only for that week-end, I should have been impressed most by his power of dealing with inconvenient questions. Most people who read Plato's early dialogues for the first time are struck by Socrates' power of getting the better of people who argue with him, by what has been called Socratic irony. It has been said that it would be translated better by "paukiness"—a Scots word meaning something like sly humour. Something like that was the most striking characteristic of Mr. Gandhi when faced with clever young questioners.

The second week-end was very different. The duty interviews were over and Mr. Gandhi could rest. Further I think that by this time he trusted us and was prepared to give us his confidence, and we saw the other side of Mr. Gandhi. It will be simplest to tell what I can remember of his remarks. He came to us on a Saturday morning. The night before some of my philosophical colleagues and I had been asked by Sir Michael Sadler, then Master of University College, to meet Pandit Malaviya, who was staying with him. The Pandit, after talking with us for a little about philosophy, confided to us a plan he had formed in which he was deeply concerned, and in which he wished us to help him. Would we help him to summon a conference of the most distinguished philosophers and scientists in the world? "When we have got these great men together we shall get authoritative answers to two simple but profound questions which we shall ask them. The first will be: Does God exist? and the second: What is His Will? and when we have got authoritative answers

actual facts. When the politicians were concerned too much with manoeuvres and mass effects and statistics and general results and so on, Gandhi, as he started at that simple end, seemed to me to keep far closer to the fundamental facts. He would say, for example, perfectly frankly, that he did not rest his claim for Indian independence on the assumption that India would be better governed under Swaraj. On the contrary he said: "We have to learn, and you do not learn administration overnight. But if you, the English, go on preventing us from making mistakes and suffering for them, we shall never learn." And yet so long as there was no question about India being responsible and able to make its own choice he was perfectly ready, that being thoroughly understood, to consider expediency and advantage. He did not want to dispense with frameworks and precautions, but they were not to interfere with India's free choice. I thought he was much more realistic about India than most politicians, whether British or Indian.

We had a great deal of discussion about his pacifism, and I thought then, and thought it more afterwards, that that was his most fundamental belief, even more fundamental than his hopes for India. And here I could not agree with him. And he said to me that in that matter I was as bad as other Englishmen whose characteristic is to respect the people who fight them. But whatever arguments we had it was yet a wonderful experience having him with us, and we shall not forget our sense that he had brought a blessing to us by his presence.

Oxford,

April, 1948.

G. If gratification was not the sole motive, why need there be any at all? But what do you mean by an economic motive?

M. That the man and woman find it difficult to support themselves and children in their standard of life, with their wage.

G. That is to say that they would rather indulge their passion than control themselves for their economic well-being. You may not use the word 'indulge' but substitute the word 'gratify' or 'moderately gratify', but the fact remains that they would rather moderately gratify their passion than control themselves from any economic, educational or any other motive.

M. Yes, they may legitimately do so as the lesser evil.

G. You must understand me. Don't you see that to be influenced by the economic motive they must be all engrossed by it, and then no other consideration but that should guide their conduct? Now if they were really influenced by the economic motive, it should be enough to induce self-restraint. That it does not, proves that they believe sexual indulgence to be a physical necessity.

M. Well, logically that is so. But take my own case. I have now very few children. But suppose I got more. I would find it difficult to join any national or other movement. Would it not be better for me to use contraceptives and do some public service than leave the growth of my family to mere chance? What you advise is practically impossible to do. According to your method of argument a man and woman may unite twice or thrice in a whole life, have two or three children, and then abstain completely. That may be logical, but is highly impracticable.

G. I certainly do not consider it as impracticable. Think of those whom we call 'savages'. Look at their self-control. Why, they are not even aware of it. Some of them come into contact with modern conditions and deteriorate. But the real savage unites only for progeny, and not for pleasure. It is probable that like animals a single act of union results in a conception. But after that he abstains. You see our modern conditions of life have changed, and we consider such an abstinence as a great

the uplift of masses, not individuals or classes.

G. The charkha is itself an ideal. It is not a compromise. But even if millions of years pass before the ideal of self-control is realized, I would wait. I have great patience. I am in no hurry to transform the world. But the advertisement of vice as virtue is intolerable. Some people tell me that, if my ideal were attainable, the world would be depopulated. So much the better. Men would then be translated to a better world. I am not scared by the bogey of depopulation.

## II

Sunday, 19th July, 1926.

G. Very well, now you must teach me what you can.

M. But, Bapu, it is you who are teaching. You have spoken about birth control first, and you have made certain statements which you must prove.

G. Then how shall we begin?

M. I think we need not discuss the necessity of birth control.

G. No.

M. Nor the importance of birth control from the political or social point of view.

G. No.

M. Well then, Bapu, you say that the use of contraceptives will lead to sexual indulgence. I cannot see how that will happen.

G. Then I may tell you that I have been receiving letters from hundreds of young men asking advice about their sexual life. Most of them have committed excesses and are now paying the penalty for their indulgence. These men are anxious to exercise some sort of self-control. Now you tell them that a man may indulge his sexual passion without the fear of consequences, and that such indulgence is natural and necessary. How can you then expect any moral regeneration of the persons whom sexual indulgence has ruined?

M. Bapu, there are few young men free from the sin of sexual excess. But within marriage this lasts for a short time, maybe during the first few years. Then the impulse becomes regulated, and later the period of sexual

parenthood. In fact those who commit sexual excess know that it is harmful, and have to pay a heavy penalty for it. The use of contraceptives has no direct connection with the encouragement of sexual indulgence.

G. But don't you see the influence of the mental outlook of a man on his actions? Here is a man who gratifies his sexual passion knowing that consequences may follow; and here is another man who gratifies it knowing that none need follow. The latter will act recklessly. Then again the one knows indulgence to be reprehensive; the other sees no harm in it and may even consider it a virtue. Take my own case. If I had acted with greater restraint, I would have suffered less. My body has suffered much, and that is because of my weaknesses and lapses. It is true that I recover soon, but that is because of subsequent self-control. Now you know that I apply remedies, be they water cure and the like, to avoid the consequences of my errors. I know that this is a weakness, but then I want to live. Had I exercised self-control from the commencement, my capacity for serving the masses would have been much greater.

M. But, Bapu, we are comparing an ordinary person who has sexual gratification with the fear of consequences with another ordinary person without such fear. You are thinking of what an ideal person should do. Your own case is a special case and not an ordinary one.

G. No, my case is that of an ordinary person. What I have done any other person can do by exercising self-control.

M. You may say so, but who will believe it? The average person is incapable of exercising similar control.

G. Very good, take the case of two ordinary persons. One has fear, and another is without fear, of consequences. Now fear is not always bad. For instance, the fear of God is good. He who fears God exerts himself and improves. Take the case of Chaurichaura. I saw the consequences of violence and feared them. I got one telegram and then another—a graphic one from my son. That very moment I made up my mind. Look at it. Just a day before I had sent that memorable challenge to the Government, and a day after came the stopping of civil disobedience. I knew



## A GLIMPSE OF GANDHIJI

*Gurdial Mallik*

**M**Y memory goes back to the year 1921 when Gandhiji visited Karachi in the course of his lightning tour round the country in connection with his newly-evolved experiment in welding people together into an humble instrument in the hands of the Power "other than ourselves", and "that makes for righteousness—an experiment incorrectly characterized as the non-cooperation movement. In spite of his unusually heavy programme, packed with public engagements of all sorts, he had condescended to come for a few minutes to the night school for labourers with which I was associated as one of the workers. At the scheduled time we began our evening routine with a couple of songs—one of an unknown mystic of Sindh, and the other of the well-known mystic of Rajputana, Mirabai. As the former has since become a great favourite of Gandhiji, and is also one which he has generally asked me to sing to him whenever I have met him afterwards, I would like to translate it here:

O Lord, Thy house (this world) is wonderful, and in it Thou dwellest everywhere.

The sky is studded with stars, but the moon among them art Thou.

The market-place is crowded with people, but the breath animating them all art Thou.

The temples are installed with innumerable images, but through them all art mirrored forth Thou.

The river is aswaying with waves, but their liege and lord art Thou.

That boatman sits at the helm, but at the helm of his life art Thou.

We were so absorbed in the congregational singing that we did not notice when on tiptoe Gandhiji and his party had walked into the specious compound of the school and stood in a corner, listening silently to the song. However, no sooner was the song over than, spotting him, we all rose to our feet to do him reverence. I then requested him to say a few words to the students. He replied: "What I would have said has been conveyed to you all

## INTERVIEWS WITH GANDHIJI

*Sir Rustom Masani*

WHEN a purely professional visit took Mahatma Gandhi to South Africa in April, 1893, who could have thought that he would return to India after two decades as the victorious general of a satyagraha campaign launched in that far-off land? And when, after having taught his countrymen in that land the secret of soul force in winning a victory for Truth without recourse to violence, he returned to India, who could have dreamt that within a short time he would be the hero of many a stupendous satyagraha struggle in his own motherland? During that short interval he led a comparatively quiet life in India as a social worker not actively interested in controversial politics. Social service, emancipation of men and women from the thralldom of harmful customs and usages, the curse of untouchability, the grinding poverty of the people and swadeshism as its remedy, and, particularly, the exposition and propagation of his views on moral progress, then engrossed his attention. When, therefore, the Legislative Council of Bombay thought of appointing a Committee to formulate proposals for the prevention of professional beggary, Gandhiji was invited, as one of the most ardent social workers of the day, to be a member of the Committee. It was at this Committee's meeting that we met for the first time as fellow-workers in the field of social service.

### AN ARDENT CO-OPERATOR

Clad in pure white long coat (*angarkha*) with a *parthadi* and Kathiawadi *fenta* (turban), he sat on the right of the Chairman, the late Sir Phiroze Sethna. It was an irony of fate, however, that whilst we were trying to hammer out a solution of the very difficult and complex problem, various tragic incidents turned that enthusiastic co-worker into a dejected non-cooperator. Holding that Britain's difficulty should not be turned into India's opportunity, this apostle of ahimsa had gone so far as to organize a vigorous recruitment campaign to help Britain and her Allies. But his faith in the good intentions of the rulers

him to come out from jail and co-operate with Government. It was in pursuance of what was known as the Gandhi-Irwin pact that Gandhiji agreed to proceed to London to attend the second Round Table Conference, little imagining that on his return to India he would be sent back summarily to jail. As is generally known, officialdom then frowned on the Gandhi-Irwin peace-parley. The annoyance of the members of the Indian Civil Service was not hidden from those who moved in official circles or were otherwise in a position to watch the reaction of those who sat in the seats of the mighty to the Viceroy's earnest effort to end the political strife in India. Being in New Delhi then, in connection with my work as Secretary to the Central Banking Enquiry Committee, I had such an opportunity. Moreover, I was in Simla when Gandhiji went there in July, 1931, to see the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, and from what I noticed I had a grave misgiving that in view of the sullen antagonism of the bureaucracy and the open opposition of the European community, particularly in Bengal, Gandhiji's mission to London might not be successful. For some time it seemed doubtful whether Gandhiji would go to London, and most of the officials of the day were hoping till the last moment that he would not.

To the chagrin of the die-hards, however, Gandhiji did go to the Round Table Conference. Hostile as was their attitude, the hot-heads in the Congress camp also adopted an attitude harmful to his mission. They appeared to have been seized with the fever of war mentality, even whilst their chief was participating in the deliberations of the Conference, and talked of repudiation of debts and commercial discrimination, to the consternation of the business interests in Britain and the European community in India. These in their turn subtly launched a vigorous campaign to torpedo all schemes for a friendly settlement with the Congress. Moreover, with the sudden change in the composition of the British Cabinet the Conservative Party gained in influence and the attitude of the British Government began to stiffen. I was then in London, and

the most obnoxious clauses of the ordinance would not be put into operation whilst you would be co-operating with them, perhaps a satisfactory solution of the difficulty may be arrived at."

"I am not going to impose any humiliating condition," said Gandhiji. "I am trying hard to find an honourable solution."

During the next few days I had several occasions to speak to him. Although I did not revert to the same subject, I gathered that he had been in communication with the Secretary of State for India. On arrival in Bombay we were told that it had been arranged that Gandhiji should leave the ship first. As he was passing along the gangway, I told my son who had come to receive me: "Minoo, I hope you hot-heads will not urge him to break off negotiations with Government."

"What are you talking?" he exclaimed. "The war is already declared. Have you not heard that Jawaharlal has been arrested? There can be no peace in the country now."

"We had no news about Jawahar's arrest," I said, "but it is nonsense to talk of war. Let Gandhiji have time to consider what can yet be done for a peaceful settlement."

It was the twentyeighth day of December. Arriving home, I saw on my writing table a Christmas card from Sir Frederick Sykes, Governor of Bombay. In all conversations I had with him I had found him most keen on receiving suggestions for putting an end to the political strife in the country. As I apprehended that he had perhaps instructions to take action which would lead to another deadly conflict, I considered it necessary, in reciprocating his good wishes, to add: "With Gandhiji on board the steamer our voyage was most interesting. I found him willing to continue his co-operation with Government so far as possible, but on arrival here I find that his position has been rendered very, very difficult."

#### ARRESTED ONCE MORE

Gandhiji asked for an interview with the Viceroy. His Excellency, however, read in the telegram sent to him a threat of civil disobedience and refused to see Gandhiji.

of power by council entry. Not that the Congress spirit was killed; nothing could kill it. But it seemed to them politic to abandon the struggle for the time being, to retrieve the lost ground and to prepare for another more vigorous campaign under favourable conditions.

### THE HISTORIC FAST

Then came what we all regarded as the greatest crisis in the life of Gandhiji. It had been left to the British Government to solve the problem of representation of the Scheduled Classes in the new legislatures, a problem that should have been settled by the leaders of the Hindu community themselves. The decision given by the British Government appeared to Gandhiji, the greatest champion of the rights of those neglected and ill-treated classes, to offer not the shortest way out but the quickest way down. At the Round Table Conference he had already sounded the warning that he would resist with his life the grant of separate electorates to the Scheduled Classes as he held that it would be harmful not merely to them but to Hinduism as a whole. He, therefore, decided to fast unto death, if he could thereby awaken his countrymen to the enormity of the disaster that seemed to threaten Hinduism and nationalism alike.

On the day the alarming decision was announced I asked several friends, mostly members of the Welfare of India League, what could be done to avert the catastrophe and to turn it into an opportunity to promote good feeling and comradeship between the different sections and factions of the population and to ask with one voice for the release of Gandhiji and the simultaneous termination of ordinance rule and civil disobedience. Whilst we were bending our thought and energy in that direction, I noticed with regret that some people could regard the fast unto death in no other light than political blackmail. I, therefore, considered it necessary to point out to his critics that what was lacerating Gandhiji's heart was the want of fellow-feeling undermining the foundations of the unity of Hindu society. In an article I wrote on the subject I considered it necessary

go there. But if I prefer to remain in jail, and if Mathuradas (pointing to his nephew who was standing near us) is with me, and a few others, our poor peasants will at least feel that they have behind prison doors friends watching their interests. I am going to declare individual civil disobedience."

"But I am advocating council entry with full force," I replied. "If only a few go to the Councils as Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel and others did, and if they remain in a minority, what can they achieve? I should like you to go there in full strength and be the leader of the Opposition."

Gandhiji smiled and said that what I had stated went counter to his reasoning. He was of opinion, and I could not controvert it, that once a movement such as civil disobedience were withdrawn, the spirit of revolt of the people stimulated thereby would be killed, and that it would not be easy to revive it.

Soon afterwards Gandhiji did declare himself in favour of individual civil disobedience. That, however, did not ease the tension. He asked for an interview with the Viceroy, but the request was turned down again on the ground that civil disobedience had not been completely called off. Thereupon he courted arrest once more, and I lost touch with him until I met him again at Juhu about five years later and requested him to write a foreword to my biography of Dadabhai Naoroji. He cheerfully agreed. I said I would send him an advance copy of my manuscript which I intended to complete in England after certain inquiries. He smiled and said he doubted whether he would be able to spare time to glance through it. I told him I had based my chapter on South Africa almost entirely on the correspondence between him and Dadabhai, and invited his special attention to it.

#### GANDHIJI WRITES FOREWORD TO MY BOOK

The foreword was received by me in London in time. Gandhiji did not appear to have had time to go through the manuscript, but from the following letter I received

Once more, however, Gandhiji had to be released; once more a sagacious and truly sympathetic Viceroy endeavoured to end the strife by calling the famous Simla Conference. Although that Conference proved abortive, council entry was once more favoured by the Congress High Command, and I wished I could have an opportunity to tell Gandhiji that in my humble opinion elections should be contested not merely to demonstrate the strength of the Congress but also to take and stick to office. One day I got the opportunity quite unexpectedly. He was travelling in the same train in which I was going from Poona to Bombay. I got into his compartment at Lonavla, and put it to him that so long as Congressmen were regarded as political rebels they would get kicks, but that once they assumed office the Services would be anxious to carry out their behests, as they had done when the popular ministries were functioning. The British Government, too, I added, would come to terms with the Congress more readily than they would otherwise. I cannot say that Gandhiji agreed. It was his day of silence; he said nothing, but from the way he nodded it appeared to me that he did not disagree. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was also in the train, however, asserted emphatically that on that occasion there was no idea of refusing or relinquishing office.

I do not know what will be the next occasion that will take me to Gandhiji. I hope and pray it may be to give my felicitations to him for his success in at last bringing about a settlement with the Muslim League and securing for India the freedom he has fought for as the Nestor of Indian Politics for the last three decades.

Bombay,  
15-2-1946.

PS. When I wrote this I asked myself: "Shall I ever get such an opportunity?" Within a week, however, high hopes were raised by the announcement that the British Government had decided to send to India a Delegation of three front-rank Cabinet Ministers with a view to ending the constitutional deadlock. On the day following the announcement I was in Poona and as Gandhiji was also

December, 1916. The Gujarat Sabha was an Association (which worked as a Congress committee also) founded for the purposes of the economic, political and social advancement of Gujarat.

The disobedience of the magisterial order by Gandhiji at Motihari in Bihar preventing him from enquiring into the grievances of the Bihar labourers sent a thrill through the hearts of many prominent members of the Gujarat Sabha; and all of us were unanimous that Gandhiji should be approached to accept the Presidentship of the Sabha, if we were to function vigorously for the real advancement of Gujarat.

As Secretary of the Sabha, I approached Gandhiji with the request to accept the Presidentship of the Sabha. He was good enough to respond to our wishes. I felt the inspiration of new opportunities for work as Secretary under Gandhiji's direction. We had, however, really no idea as to the mind, outlook and views of Gandhiji on the politics or economics of the country. We were imbued with ideas of the old type, namely, service and advancement through representations to Government in good English.

To us, therefore, besides the courage exhibited by Gandhiji at Motihari, the greatest asset from the Sabha's then point-of-view was the fact that Gandhiji was a Bar-at-Law, and that his English was so chaste and nice that even an Englishman would find it difficult to compete with him.

The work of the Sabha became more vigorous and voluminous after Gandhiji became the President. I had to get letter-papers printed. On the left side at the top of the letter-papers, the names of the office-bearers are printed. The first, of course, was the name of the President. This was described as under:

"Mohandas K. Gandhi, Esqr., Bar-at-Law".

The letter-papers were used for all correspondence, including that with Gandhiji.

When I first met him after the letter-papers were printed, Gandhiji asked me: "Mavalankar, why have you described me as 'Bar-at-Law'?" I asked him if he was not



wife. As I learnt later, some friends expressed to Gandhiji their grief at my conduct. They naturally felt sad that a friend of theirs should be so callous and forgetful of his obligations under the marital vows. Nobody had, however, the courage to speak to me and get from me an explanation about my conduct. As usual, I was judged *ex parte*, and the matter was carried to Gandhiji. I was then in Bombay.

This led to an article by Gandhiji in *Navajivan* dwelling generally on marital obligations and remarriage by a man on the demise of his wife. The article did not refer to me at all either expressly or impliedly, but friends, who had carried the matter to Gandhiji, knew why and on what occasion it came to be written.

Gandhiji wrote to me a personal letter also stating that he considered himself duty bound, as a friend, to tender advice to me in a matter in which I was perhaps not acting to the proper standard. I wrote to him in reply a long letter fully explaining my situation. Gandhiji's reply was typical. He said: "I appreciate fully your point of view. You should do what your conscience directs or permits you to do. My duty ended with tendering you advice as a friend. I assure you, whatever course you take, there will be absolutely no change in my attitude or love for you."

The reader will easily appreciate the peace of mind and the source of strength that I found in his reply.

(4) Since December, 1932 to March, 1933, I did not keep quite well, and suffered from dysentery and low temperature. The Collector of Ahmedabad recorded my statement over the question of boycott, on a large scale, of British machinery by Ahmedabad mills, and soon after he arrested and put me in the Sabarmati prison on the 2nd March, 1933, under the Emergency Powers Act. I was thence transferred to the Ratnagiri Jail on the 19th March, 1933, and set free there next day with an order not to leave the Ratnagiri district. My health was bad. I was advised rest, and the question was whether I should obey the order. There was no humiliating clause in the order, such as reporting to the police, etc. I, therefore, decided

on 1st August 1933. He had decided to give up the Harijan Ashram. He had to consider momentous issues about the future of the struggle and the country. Yet in the midst of his worries he found time to write, in his own hand, a post card to me. This was the substance of what he wrote:

"I was thinking of writing to you for several days, but could not snatch time. I sat today with a determination to write, and hence this letter. There is an amount of work to be done for the country, and the best course for you would be, therefore, to take advantage of the compulsory rest by improving your health and getting more robust for further responsibilities in the future."

This short letter not only clearly indicated that Bapu approved the line of my conduct, but further shows his solicitude for every one of us—even the humblest among his followers.

(5) It was the year 1921. I was Secretary of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee and was also the General Secretary of the Reception Committee of the 36th Indian National Congress held at Ahmedabad. The Reception Committee had planned the Delegates' camp and other structures in pure khadi. I purchased khadi on a large scale and had to honour *hundis* to the tune of about ten to fifteen thousand rupees a day. I was expecting for several months from the Bombay Committee a substantial sum of Rs. 1½ lakhs which was promised to be remitted. My reminders did not seem to have any effect. My balance dwindled down to about Rs. 50,000. How could I honour the fifth day's *hundi*, if I had not with me immediately the Bombay sum? Bapu was to go to Bombay. I explained to him the situation, and requested him to send me a wire that the money would be remitted that very day. That would ease the pressure on my mind. He agreed to do so. A telegram in those days cost only six annas. I did not receive any telegram the next day. I was naturally very much worried and thought that Bapu must have forgotten about the small matter in the din and bustle of urgent work at Bombay.

Myself: Shall I be justified in issuing such a ticket for Mr. so and so, who is working day and night with us and, but for whose help, we could not have made any progress in the matter of our arrangements?

Bapu: Yes.

Myself: Then, arguing in the same way, why can I not issue such a ticket to myself?

Bapu laughed heartily at the question and said: "Yes, you can. But let me tell you that, if any of the invitees care to attend the Congress, I would surely say to them: The Reception Committee has shown its courtesy. But won't you like to pay instead of attending free?"

This line of reasoning very much appealed to me, as the maximum fee for a visitor's ticket was rupees five thousand, and I was very much short of funds.

Another difficulty then faced me in the form of a resolution of the Reception Committee. I then said: "I shall issue the tickets, but there is a small difficulty about the resolution of the Reception Committee. All the same, I think I shall issue the tickets.

Bapu: How will you overcome the resolution of the Reception Committee?

Myself: I shall let it alone. I do not think I can get the resolution rescinded.

Bapu: No, you should not act against the resolution of the Reception Committee.

Myself: Then what shall I do? I do not think I shall be able to argue with the Reception Committee and carry conviction to them. I must, therefore, take the risk of displeasing them, if at all these tickets are to be issued.

Bapu: No, that would not be proper. You must hold a special meeting of the Reception Committee and get the resolution rescinded.

Myself: I will do so provided you agree to remain present at the meeting and argue with the members.

Needless to add that Gandhiji attended the meeting. The original resolution was rescinded, and then the tickets were issued. While I was prepared to get my objective,

Bannerjee who dominated the platform in those days. "No," we said, "this gentleman may have led a movement and fought the Whites in South Africa, but he is no speaker! He cannot move the masses or carry vast audiences with him!" How sadly mistaken were those immature judgments!

My next recollection of Gandhiji is of the Gujarat Political Conference at Godhra where he made his first debut in politics. It was October 1917. Educational authorities in Bombay had issued a circular prohibiting students from attending political meetings. This was as a result of Mrs. Besant's Home Rule Movement. Priding ourselves on some brave act of defiance, some of us went about attending these meetings and conferences. To Godhra, I went in the same train with Shri Mahadev Desai who was to place himself at Gandhiji's disposal there. I hesitated to go to see Gandhiji, but Mahadevbhai pressed me. I simply bowed to him. Someone—I think it was Shri Manilal Kothari—told him that, since I had come to attend the Political Conference in violation of the Government order, I could be called a satyagrahi and a follower of Bapu! Gandhiji only smiled: he did not probably agree with this certificate!

At the Conference, Gandhiji's speech was so unconventional—dealing as it did with subjects pertaining to the daily lives and activities of men including the cleaning of latrines—that it surprised many and shocked a few. To some, his emphasis on non-violence did not appeal; others were disappointed at the absence of passionate tirades against the Government and the British; others again did not relish his crusade against Hindu orthodoxy as summed up in his active fraternization with the 'untouchables'.

One small incident I still remember. He was very keen on beginning the proceedings punctually. Once the proceedings were delayed by about fortyfive minutes owing to the late arrival of a popular leader. In opening the proceedings Gandhiji simply said: "I think Swaraj will also be delayed by fortyfive minutes!"

arrangements had been made at the Kharagpur station or in the town. I was truly amazed at this meticulous care by one who would not ordinarily be expected even to think of these matters!

When Gandhiji stayed at Shri Sarat Chandra Bose's house in Calcutta in 1937, we never disturbed him. We were given by him the easy, pleasant and enviable work of taking Mahadevbhai out in the evenings for a walk. At first he did not know with whom Mahadevbhai was going, but he immediately guessed it; then he entrusted that work to us. Once Mahadevbhai had heavy arrears of work and was very tired; he told us that he did not think he could go that day. But Gandhiji gently reprimanded him. He told him: "You might go without food for a day but never without exercise, Mahadev! Please go." Mahadevbhai obeyed. It was a touching sight to see him working near Gandhiji and to watch their mental reactions and talk. Often after that sad day in August 1942, when Mahadevbhai passed away, I thought of those afternoons and evenings when I saw them both together in Calcutta.

I had occasion to see Gandhiji twice for what may be called public work. It was during July-August 1941 in connection with the Indo-Burma Immigration Agreement, on which I wanted his views and guidance. The first time I saw him, he had just seen the Agreement and had not studied it. Should I see Shri Aney about this since he was about to join the Executive Council in charge of the Portfolio of Indians Abroad? Certainly, said Gandhiji. He thought that was probably the best appointment the Viceroy had made. On the second occasion, he had not only perused the Agreement but was decisively against its terms. He said that he would draft and issue a statement on the Immigration question, and enquired whether I could wait a day more. It was a privilege to do so. Next day he wrote it out in his own hand and asked me to go through it and get it typed. But there was hardly anything to see through in the sense of verbal corrections and

his demise and was touched by it. He wrote a beautiful letter which is one of my proud possessions, and asked me to read something with Mahadevbhai's son and take interest in his training. When we went to see him (which was only once during his month's stay), I told him that I wanted to make him laugh. He said it was all to the good, as people only saw him to tell him of their miseries and sorrows! When I read out to him the imaginary last words attributed to him in a *New Statesman* competition, he chuckled heartily over the remark: "I hope they won't think I am doing *this* also (i.e. dying) in order to embarrass the British."

He was deeply concerned when he came to know that my daughter Uma was ill. He made kind enquiries every day from Dr. Sushilabehn Nayyar and personally came to see her. He was observing silence during those days and carried on conversation with him through gestures and interpreters. He made everyone (including the patient) roar with laughter.

On my return from U.S.A., I went to see him at Sevagram and convey to him such impressions as I could and also convey such messages as I had. He was observing silence. The first question he put to me was: "Did you enjoy yourself thoroughly?" at which all round him laughed. He accepted a book of Louis Fischer's which I had brought for him, and then said: "In short, America and other countries are not prepared to help us unless we help ourselves."

Twice in Sodepur we had the privilege of having those brisk walks with him, one evening and one morning. He likes 'small talks' when he walks, and chuckled when we told him some stories. Referring to Pandit Jawaharlal, he said: "In many ways, he has surpassed me!"

Calcutta,  
25-3-1946.

collected from the blank pages on the backs of letters and other communications which come in endless numbers by each post. Bapu begins to write. The article seems to be of a serious nature, probably on some burning problem of the day, for a concentrated, even stern, look appears on his countenance. Before the article is finished he begins to feel sleepy. The pen is laid in the stand, and the tiny tin top is placed on the balm bottle. The "pusti" sheets are carefully put on one side, and Bapu turns and lies down on his *gaddi*. He removes his glasses, places them by the side of his pillow, and in one or two minutes he is fast asleep, and breathing as peacefully as a little child.

I take up a handkerchief and, sitting near his head, keep off the flies.

Such times are for me infinitely precious, infinitely sweet, and filled with a profound teaching which could never be conveyed in words.

On one such occasion, when I was sitting near Bapu, he could not find his pencil, a little stump which he had been cherishing. A whisper went round that Bapuji was hunting for his pencil. Members of the staff began to search about. It could not be found anywhere, so somebody brought him a new pencil. "No," said Bapu, "I want my little stump." So somebody brought him another stump. "Do you expect me to be satisfied with somebody else's stump?" he said. "Supposing you had lost your child, would you be satisfied if somebody brought you another child and said, 'take this one instead'?" After that a desperate hunt was made, and at last the little stump was found and triumphantly brought to Bapu, who received it with a beaming smile.

There is only one real Gandhi Ashram in the whole world, and that is the few square feet containing Bapu's *gaddi* and little writing desk.

Indian men and women with the heroic courage and faith of the martyrs of old.

Six long years elapsed before I had my first physical glimpse of him in the city of Amritsar during the Christmas of 1919. I was then studying for my Master of Arts in the Government College, Lahore, and had gone to Amritsar to attend the Congress session as a student visitor. It was a raw winter evening, made worse by a heavy downpour of rain. From the station I trudged through the mud to the house of a friend. While I was climbing the stairs, a party consisting of Swami Shraddhanandji, Pandit Malaviyaji and Gandhiji came up from behind. I hid myself behind a door leaf on the staircase landing, and from my safe retreat heard a conversation which constituted a landmark in my life. It had been decided to acquire the site of the Jallianwala Bagh for the nation and to turn it into a memorial to the martyrs who had fallen in General Dyer's massacre on the fateful 13th of April 1919; and the deputation had come to expedite the collection for the memorial fund. During the discussion Malaviyaji appealed with his characteristic winsomeness in the name of *Dharma* (duty), *Artha* (worldly gain), *Kāma* (happiness), and *Moksha* (salvation). But somehow it did not cut ice with the hard-headed, hard-boiled businessmen of Amritsar. When Gandhiji's turn came to speak, he simply said that the target that had been fixed had to be reached. Failing that he would sell his ashram and make up the amount from the proceeds. He would not let the sanctity of the national resolve, to which he had been party, to be lightly treated. The businessmen were left wondering at the rocklike firmness of their strange client, and the first lesson that he had given them in the sanctity of national resolves.

A battle royal was waged in the Congress during that session over the Montford scheme of reforms. In the draft resolution under discussion the reforms were described as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing". Lokamanya Tilak advocated acceptance of the scheme in order to prove its inadequacy. "Whether we like to use it or not," he explained, "has been deliberately omitted in the resolution,



the eternal truth underlying this resolution we are bound to fail.....I agree that there was grave provocation given by the Government. The Government went mad, but our people went mad too. I say, do not return madness with madness, but return madness with sanity, and the whole situation will be yours." His voice was full-chested, so ringing and distinct as to be clearly audible to the farthest end of the vast gathering in that pre-mike era.

Another little incident came a couple of months later. I had gone to Gandhiji's temporary residence at Lahore to make an appointment with him, through the good offices of a friend. Martial law trials were then in full swing, and Gandhiji's residence was at all times besieged with the friends and relations of those who were involved in the prosecutions. One such deputation was having conference with him when I reached there. It was considered to be a hopeless case as there was a murder charge against the accused. How could anyone dare to recommend for amnesty an accused guilty of political murder? They were in utter despair. But Gandhiji consoled them: "Let me have full facts of the case and a clear confession if your relation has done anything wrong. I would love even the worst of murderers to be saved from the gallows. I have several such men in my ashram as valued co-workers. They have been completely converted to non-violence."

Here was something new in the political field, a man of religion tackling political problems from an essentially human angle. There was something in that voice—a quality of compassion coupled with a quiet dignity and a sense of kingly power—that gripped me. I had found my master, and thereafter I was his man.

I saw him a couple of days later, and it was decided that I should go and join him in the Ashram at Sabarmati. "But I do not want you to discontinue your studies just yet," he added. "You must first finish what you have begun." How often I have since heard him quote the Sanskrit text which says that not to undertake is the first mark of wisdom, but having undertaken a thing, wisdom requires that one must see it through.

ping behind; and when I explained that no one had invited me to accompany, he gave peremptory instructions to his entourage for the future in regard to me. Afterwards he explained to me that someone in the party had been remiss in his duty, but I should have made it my concern to save him from his mistake by my vigilance. Shyness or modesty when it stood in the way of performing one's duty should be regarded as a species of subtle pride and conquered."

Later he introduced me to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj as "the young man I spoke to you about." The affectionate, warm-hearted Jamnalalji at once took me under his wing, and as a token of his affection made me eat a piece of corn meal cake, and when I hesitated, clinched the matter by saying: "In these matters—eating and drinking—you should be guided by me, in everything else by all means follow Bapu."

That evening Shri Mahadev Desai left for Ahmedabad to look after *Young India*, and the long anticlimax of my schooling under Bapu began. Moisture on the outside of a glass must be wiped before handing it to anyone; after washing one's hands do not push open a door with them while serving meals; before offering a cup of milk it must be stirred with a spoon to bring to the surface any foreign matter lying at the bottom; the rationale and importance of dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's in a manuscript to make it legible, how to make a bed, how to clean a commode, how to scan a newspaper thoroughly in the shortest time—these were some of the little things that I had to learn within the next few days. Not a small part of the training consisted in unlearning what I had previously learnt at school and college. "Call for facts, do not speculate in the void. It is waste of mental energy, a sign of laziness. Do not cite epigrams turned out by others, distrust them, think for yourself. Thought is more precious than language, and judgment most precious of all. If the judgment is faulty, everything else is nothing worth," and so on. Later he began to twit me for reading literature, and when I chaffed under it he called me thin-skinned and

stani to everything he had to say. He was at that time struggling with his Hindustani, and during the railway journeys the 'Munshi' used to be his unfailing companion, and whenever he could steal a minute—while taking his meals or even in the lavatory, he would turn over its pages.

About the same time a deputation waited on him to request him to preside over a Goraksha Parishad. Their ideology was of the orthodox, militant type. He declined their invitation saying that, although he attached great importance to the subject, his notions of 'Goraksha' were peculiar to himself and differed from theirs. "So long as there is the bone of a single slaughtered cow in India or a cow that is skin and bone, cow protection is a mere make-believe. My cow protection requires the uttermost purity and self-sacrifice, austerity, hard study and penance on our part. I see no place for these in your programme."

With another deputation he discussed the removal of untouchability. The Congress had not yet adopted it as an integral part of its programme, and some of the deputationists could not understand its importance in terms of the independence struggle. They thought that it would disrupt the common, united political front. But he was adamant. "You do not know whom you are pitted against. The moment they (the British) find that the game of setting up the Hindus against the Muslims is played out, they will use the 'suppressed' classes to push forth their policy of 'divide and rule'." This was ten years before the Harijan question became the question of questions and the main stumbling block in the realization of our national aspiration.

From Delhi we went to Lucknow where a session of the Khilafat Conference was to be held. It was at Lucknow too that I was first introduced to Pandit Motilalji as "the writer of that article on the Theory and Practice of Non-cooperation." I felt greatly flattered when the fastidious old Panditji greeted me with an appreciative smile, remarking that it (the article) was "extremely well done".

with letters containing knotty conundrums and himself check the replies. He deprecated fineness or dialectical tricks in replies, wanted answers to be straight, clear and to the point. "They must squarely meet the correspondent's difficulty." But in case of disputations correspondents who wrote only to lay traps he appreciated a clever, diplomatic reply or even a good retort, provided it was free from sting. Any reply of more than five or ten lines was rejected and consigned to the waste paper basket. The address was no less minutely scrutinized. Not to know or not to be able to find with the help of Bradshaw and posts and telegraphs guide the exact location of an out-of-the-way place in India was regarded as a culpable failure. Vagueness about train timings or the exact time it took for the post to reach its destination by a particular route was another cardinal sin. Deciphering bad handwriting provided another test in patience, perseverance, and resourcefulness. When the name of the place in an address baffled all efforts at decipherment he recommended plagiarising the illegible handwriting as closely as possible, and on another occasion suggested that the addressee's signature should be cut out from the original letter and pasted on to the address cover!

In the wake of these came other lessons. First was a delicate consideration for the convenience of the hosts. Being late at meals he regarded as inexcusable himsa. At the same time to succumb to the attentions of the fond and overgenerous hosts he regarded as a sign of weakness of character. "If you really want and insist on your hosts providing you with wholesome, simple diet, they will understand and have respect for you. If you succumb to their hospitality they will enjoy it but secretly they will have contempt for you, and that rightly." He always expected us to remember in the midst of overflowing kindness and hospitality that surrounded us everywhere that India was a poor country where millions did not enjoy even three square meals. But to be squeamish about freely using milk and even costly fruit when it was available, he no less regarded as a sign of perverse and unhealthy

handed it to the astounded press representative, at the next halt duly finished and revised—a classic of its kind. “One must be able to command one’s thinking as an expert horseman does the horse he rides,” he remarked afterwards. He co-related it with Brahmacharya. “Ordinarily our thoughts jostle chaotically in our mind. The discipline of Brahmacharya enables one to order them and to exclude at will every thought, impulse or feeling that is not relevant to the thinking in hand. If we could do that, we would not know what fatigue is. It is not the work that kills, it is the chaos, the friction of ideas in the mind that causes the wear and tear.”

He had not yet resumed third class travelling—his state of health did not allow it after his recent illness. Nor did I ever see him at that time sit down to say his morning or evening prayers individually or with the rest while out of the Ashram. That came later after his release from Yeravda prison in 1924.

Another little incident that happened during this tour left an indelible impression on my mind. At Lahore he was putting up with the late Lala Lajpat Rai. The lion of the Punjab had not yet accepted in full the non-cooperation programme. Some Punjab leaders came to see Gandhiji and offered to take independent action under his lead. But he (Gandhiji) discountenanced the proposed move. The Punjab was Lalaji’s province. He would not encourage or be party to any indiscipline in Lalaji’s camp. It would be disloyalty to a colleague, and that was what he had never been guilty of in his life. In the Punjab he would act only with and through Lalaji. They must follow Lalaji’s advice when it differed from his own. Lalaji was not present in the room when the conversation took place. But he overheard it from the adjoining room and was so deeply moved by it that it laid the foundation of an indissoluble and lifelong friendship between the two. Gandhiji maintained the same rigorous code of loyalty to all comrades throughout his life.

New Delhi,  
13-4-1948.

Ganga, how the two come together at the Sangam at Prayag, and still one can discern the two currents distinct from each other for some distance. The joke became so much the richer for the instruction it brought them.

At the time of the Rajkot Satyagraha, Shri Kasturba insisted on going to Rajkot to fill the breach caused by the arrest of Shrimatis Maniben Patel and Mridula Sarabhai. She had been mothering Ramdas Gandhi's little son for some time. The boy had become very attached to her and would not leave his grandmother's side even for a little while. After her departure for Rajkot he was disconsolate and cried for 'Motiba' (Grandmother) all the time. Nobody could manage him, and Gandhiji was too busy. But he had to take up the matter in the end. He sent for the child and told him that he would soon be with 'Motiba'. The little imp was at once all smiles. Gandhiji took out a *mālā* (rosary) and gave it to him. He told him the story of little Dhruva, and then advised him to sit down in meditation in imitation of the child saint. When he had done so, Gandhiji told him to tell the beads repeating 'Motiba' each time. "If you do that with absolute concentration and without a break, Motiba will be with you in person." And so little Kana sat down with eyes closed, counting the beads in all seriousness, with all the concentration that he was capable of. The family had a little relief and could attend to their work. From time to time little Kana would open his eyes and complain: "Motiba has not yet come." Gandhiji reprimanded him in mock seriousness: "That is because you interrupt your meditation time and again. In this way she won't come at all." And so the fun went on for two or three days. In the meantime Gandhiji had made arrangements for the boy to be sent to his mother at Dehradun!

#### IN SORROW AND SICKNESS TOO

His laughter has at times the quality of tears in it. Many of us can laugh when all is going well, but Gandhiji's sense of humour does not leave him even in the midst of adversity and sorrow. No one who saw him laughing and

to Juhu after three days' stay in Poona, he was at his lowest; and stricter rules had to be enforced in order to ensure a more satisfactory convalescence.

#### HOW GANDHIJI BRINGS DOWN HIS BLOOD PRESSURE

That reminds me of an interesting conversation that Gandhiji had with a homoeopathic physician who was trying to elicit his symptomatology. The physician first questioned him about his family history. When and what did his father die of, he asked. "He had had a fall, developed fistula, and died at the age of 65," replied Gandhiji. That did not help. The physician proceeded: "What did your mother die of?" Gandhiji: "She became a widow and died of a broken heart." It was no good. The physician was not getting what he considered helpful replies. Seeing a bottle of jaggery on Gandhiji's table, he asked: "Do you like sweet things or pungent?" and added, "I think you like sweets." "I have a sweet tooth," replied Gandhiji, "but I could gorge myself with *bhajias* and fritters." "Oh yes, no one likes only sweets," remarked the physician indulgently. Gandhiji interrupted him: "Don't say that. I have known Brahmins who will take huge *ladus* (Sweet balls) by the dozen without any *bhajias*."

The physician was getting a bit impatient. In homoeopathy, they say, the prescription depends upon the patient's symptom complex. He had been trying to interrogate Gandhiji as carefully as he could, but he was not meeting with luck. Still he was not going to give up easily. "What about your memory?" he asked. "As rotten as you can imagine," replied Gandhiji. "I have lost the memory for details. I have often envied my friends who could roll out whole poems after reading them once." "If you can give me that gift, I shall become your unpaid advertising agent," he added with a twinkle in his eye. "God alone can give these gifts, Mahatmajji," replied the physician. "I cannot do so, however much I may like your offer." "Then give it to me without my offer," said Gandhiji. "Do you remember the occasion when years ago you went to visit the Mission Hospital at Hardwar? I took you round," the physician proceeded especially emphasizing the last part of the

medicines. Regulation of your diet is all you require to get strong." Before he rose to go, he mentioned to Gandhiji about a pupil of his who was very keen on meeting Gandhiji. "She is a sweet Gujarati girl, Mahatmaji, and I would like to bring her to you if you permit me," he said. "All Gujarati girls are sweet," replied Gandhiji. "No, Mahatmaji, say all girls are sweet," corrected the physician. But Gandhiji was in a playful mood. "No," he persisted, "it is claimed as a speciality of Gujarati girls. But mind you do not run away with her." "How can you say such a thing, Mahatmaji?" said the poor man in holy horror. "I am sixty, I cannot run away with anyone at this age." But Gandhiji was bent on teasing him. "I know of a man who ran away with a French girl after the age of sixty," he said. Everybody had a good laugh. "This is how I bring down my blood-pressure," remarked Gandhiji when the laughter had subsided. And besides some innocent entertainment, he had gained a friend.

#### LAUGHING AWAY THE BLUES

As an illustration of how Gandhiji can make people laugh away their blues the following may be cited. Years ago an esteemed lady friend and co-worker allowed herself petulantly to make an irresponsible statement about him. On the report being referred to her for verification she replied: "Ask your own heart to verify it." In reply he wrote the following post card which I reproduce from memory:

"Dear Mother Superior,

I must address you like this. You are so solemn. I must laugh or I shall burst. How is my poor heart to tell me what your tongue whispered into somebody's ear?"

#### HIS READY WIT

He has an unfailing, ready wit. I have never known him to be discomfited in repartee. During his incarceration in the Yeravda Central Prison in 1930, he once ordered a knife to be made in the jail workshop. It was done in a hurry and with unskilled labour. The next day the following little dialogue took place between him and the Superintendent of the jail:



teristic. In the course of his A.I.C.C. speech on the 8th of August, 1942, he had made a humorous allusion to the possibility of his living for a hundred and twenty-five years. He had often been reminded by friends about that remark as a "public commitment" to live for a hundred and twentyfive years. His reply to Malaviyaji ran: "Your wire. At a stroke you have cut off twentyfive years. Add twentyfive to yours!"

### THAT INFECTIOUS SMILE

His good humour is so catching that it led the late Maulana Mohamed Ali once to make a grievance of it. "Mahatmaji, you are very unfair to us. We come to you full of grouse, to quarrel with you. But you make us smile and laugh in spite of ourselves. So our grouse remains unventilated, and you think that it is all right with us. And he quoted the well-known couplet of Ghalib to describe his dilemma:

उनक दीदार से चेहरे पे जो आ जाती है रौनक,  
वे समझते हैं कि बीमार का हाल अच्छा है.

Most people think that when Gandhiji meets to discuss political questions with his colleagues, the atmosphere must be very tense and solemn. The fact is that these meetings are often a picnic of wit and humour. Here is an illustration. C. R. and Gandhiji were discussing a letter which Gandhiji had addressed to Mr. Churchill containing his celebrated retort courteous to the latter's description of him as "the naked Fakir"!

C. R. I am afraid your letter will be misunderstood. It was a naughty letter.

G. I don't think so. I meant it seriously.

C. R. You have touched him on the raw by rubbing in a past utterance of his, of which he is probably not very proud.

G. No. I have taken out the sting by appropriating his remark as an unintended compliment.

C. R. I hope you are right.

G. I am sorry, I can't return the compliment!

## GANDHIJI AND WOMEN

*Rameshwari Nehru*

MY acquaintance with Gandhiji goes back to the year 1927. I heard and read about him ever since he returned to India from South Africa, and was a regular student of *Young India*. His sayings and teachings affected me deeply, and I felt irresistibly drawn towards him. But I had never met him. He was much too high a personage out of the reach of an insignificant individual like myself. So I felt.

In the years 1927 and 1928 I served as a member of the Age of Consent Committee appointed by the Government of India, and went to Ahmedabad in the course of my travels. He was then living in the Sabarmati Ashram, near Ahmedabad. I felt an urge to see him and sought an interview with him, wanting to ask his opinion on the subjects of early marriage and the age of consent which were under the investigation of my Committee.

An appointment was made, and I was given a few minutes' interview. It was sometime in the forenoon, and he was busy with the inmates of the Ashram all about him. I do not know what happened to me, but I was overwhelmed with emotion. Uncontrolled tears began to flow. I felt ashamed and became tongue-tied, not being able to say anything. Another appointment was made, and I came again to the Sabarmati Ashram; this time to spend the night so as to be able to attend the morning prayers. I was put in charge of the late Mahadevbhai who looked after my needs and before retiring had a preliminary talk with me. Next morning at dawn prayers were held on the sandy bank of the Sabarmati river. Thereafter I had my first walk with Gandhiji. I explained to him what we were doing in the Committee. He heard everything kindly and graciously. But I could feel a touch of uncongeniality about the atmosphere. Without discouraging me, however, or without expressing his disapproval of what I did, he made it clear that, although early marriage

run under his inspiration and guides them in great detail. He has time to enter into the domestic affairs of those who come near him and who seek his aid. He gives succour to the grief-stricken, and hope to the disheartened, by giving them daily attention. At this advanced age, with growing physical weakness and equally growing pressure of work, he writes his letters with his own hands. Others may consider all this a waste; and I have heard many highly placed men and women deploring the fact, asserting that, if Gandhiji spent his time a little more judiciously, saved it from these trivialities, and spent it on higher and greater objects which awaited his attention, things would be better managed. But I know how wrong such notions are, for the deep springs of Gandhiji's unfathomable love, like Christ's and Buddha's, must be equally shared by all without any discrimination. It is the spontaneous naturalness and the wisdom of these actions which is the real secret of the hold he has over millions. I can tell from personal experience what thrill of joy a few uneven and illegible lines of his own hand-writing have given me and how I have longed to get them. It is this devotion to small matters which lifts him above everybody else, and makes the lowly feel that they too have a place in his scheme of things. In his dealings with human beings he has often struck me as a super-sculptor busily engaged with the creation of fine specimens of men and women out of the human material available to him. He moulds them, chisels them, and gives them a finish in accordance with his own conception of things. The fineness of the specimens he produces is naturally limited by the nature of the material at his command. There is, therefore, great variety and difference of stature and colour and fineness amongst his numerous followers on whom the skill of his chisel has been applied. But there is no doubt about the fact that all those hundreds of thousands of men and women who come under his magic influence are moulded into a better shape. They fall far short of his ideal, for it is so high; but they all benefit by the contact and evolve into a better and higher life.

shape to the rite of *Saptapadi* which in its orthodox symbolic form represents seven steps taken by the couple jointly in the path of life. In this new ritual the bride and the bridegroom were made to accomplish in company with each other seven pieces of activities like the reading of the Bhagavadgita, spinning, tending of the cow, cleaning the well-side and the land for cultivation etc., on the eve of the marriage. The priest who officiated at the marriage was a Harijan by caste and belonged to the Christian religion by profession. The whole proceedings were held in Hindustani. Amongst the list of pledges given and taken, some old unnecessary ones were omitted and new ones were introduced. In evolving this form of marriage he only one principle he regarded was strict adherence in life to the moral principles held by him and professed by the couple. At one stroke and in one action so many reforms which he advocates were woven into the fabric of life.

Another instance of a similar nature happened when my son's marriage was celebrated in accordance with his advice. In this case the complication was that the bride belonged to a nationality and a faith different from those of the bridegroom, and the question of the ritual of marriage allowing freedom of religion to either party was to be solved. I give below his written opinion on the matter, which prominently brings into relief his bold adherence to moral laws alone in defiance of all false notions of social prestige.

The following is a quotation from what he wrote on this occasion:

"The very word 'Hindu' is modern. The label was given to us. The name of our religion is 'Mānava Dharma', i.e., man's religion. Manusmṛiti is the code of man's religion. The fountain of all is the Vedas. But no one possesses all the Vedas. Man's religion has been undergoing evolution. Before the advent of British rule, society was undergoing change from time to time. British rule changed all this. What was fit for change became petrified. Where there was a change, it came from either the Privy

Gandhiji humorously remarked that the workers must be careful as immediately in front of him were sitting members of the C.I.D. dressed in khadi whom he could easily recognize and spot as spying on him. He said it was likely that, after intimation was duly given by these faithful servants of the British rule to the authorities, the latter might during the night remove the salt or make it impossible for anyone to take it. Therefore an alternative spot should also be kept in mind. Let it not be said that within the mighty British Empire there was not a pinch of salt for us to take. If such a thing happened, it would be to the discredit of the Empire. The secret service men looked down with shame.

The next morning nothing was altered, and the programme went through as arranged and on the spot fixed in advance. Gandhiji got up as usual at 4 o'clock, finished prayers, and after getting ready came to the sea, took bath and went to the appointed spot for picking up salt. It was an unusual sight, and it had a tremendous effect on public opinion not only in India but outside. This simple and harmless action had the most electrical effect throughout India. On my mind also it produced a deep and lasting impression. I decided to do some constructive work on the principles and lines laid down by Bapu. Shrimati Mithuben Petit was then working on prohibition in the Surat district. Under the advice of Gandhiji we decided to start an ashram at Maroli near Surat to work amongst the villagers and more especially amongst the Raniparaj (Adivasis). The ashram was started and was given the name of Kasturba Sevashram. We started with a school for training of the Raniparaj girls. We also started a small dispensary connected with it. This ashram is still working. Shrimati Mithuben Petit has devoted her whole life to service of the poor on the lines laid down by Gandhiji. She has buried herself in the ashram. A living interest in the ashram was taken by both Bapu and Kasturba. Bapu's ideals and principles are strictly observed in the ashram which owes its present position to the untiring efforts and selfless devotion of Mithuben, ably

had come to the same conclusion after deep thinking for days. On that occasion I got my first insight as to how carefully all aspects of a question were deeply studied by him.

After that, under his advice, I wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, who was then the Secretary of State for India, pointing out the hard conditions under which the Sardar was made to live and how jail rules were broken or not followed. My letter was supported by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas to whom I had related these experiences, and according to my information Sir Samuel Hoare sent suitable instructions to the Government of India.

I had to do a lot of work under Bapu's guidance and advice, especially in connection with legal matters, and though I will omit the details of such work, I can say this with confidence that in matters of law he allowed full scope to moral principles, and allowed nothing to be done which would be circumventing the law or which by any stretch of imagination could be said to be not honest.

Nagpur,  
3-4-1948.

## AT GANDHI'S FEET

*B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya*

I SAW Shri M. K. Gandhi for the first time at the Madras Congress in 1903. He had put on a coat and trousers, and a small black turban familiar to those who have studied his photographs. He spoke gently and made no great impression. I was a student of medicine then.

The next time I saw him was in the streets of Bombay in 1915 with a dhoti, a Kathiawad kisan kudta, a big

when he supported office acceptance in 1937). In 1921, at the conclusion of the Ahmedabad session, he was asking for names of the members of the Working Committee and said re: Vithalbhai: "I can spare Vithalbhai, but he cannot spare himself. Give Vithalbhai any constitution, and he will tear it to pieces." He asked me whether Deshbhakta Konda Venkatappayya should be continued in the Working Committee. I said I would not mind his omission, but the Andhra Province would. He rejoined: "Don't I know?" and continued Deshbhakta's name.

In February, 1922, after the conclusion of the All Parties' Conference presided over partly by Sir Sankaran Nair and partly by Sir M. Visweswarayya, Gandhiji enquired about the no-tax campaign in Andhra. He gave me a letter to be delivered to Deshbhakta Venkatappayya, and added an oral message to it, saying: "Please tell him that I shall be happy and glad to be told that he has given up his campaign, and that the taxes in Andhra have been paid."

Many years after he remarked that the Andhras were each a Viceroy unto himself. While leaving my house in April, 1929, during his khadi tour, Gandhiji asked me: "You say you try to keep correct, but your son is living with his wife who is only 12 years old!" "It is a lie," I said. "But is that girl not in your house?" he asked. "Yes, she, her father, mother, grandmother and sisters, are all here. They belong to this town; their home is a furlong away. They have come to see you at close quarters and therefore are here. "Oh! is that so?" said he. I was sorry for the misinformation he got, but thanked him for verifying it. That is the great glory of Gandhiji. When he lends ear to all the rumours that reach him he readily puts them to the party concerned; and I have no doubt he accepts the explanations furnished as the full truth.

In 1924, a few months after his release from prison, there was a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad; and when I was returning from the Sabarmati Ashram in his car he asked me whether it was true, as he was told, that at Cocanada Deshbandhu C. R. Das was included in the

that I could not, as I should not like to pollute the Ashram from within but preferred to admire it from without. "How?" he asked. "I can neither attend the prayers at 4 o'clock nor stand the cold of Ahmedabad," I said. "You can sleep after the prayers," he indulgently wrote. But that did not appeal to me, and I said as much.

On another issue I had the same difference with him; for he was quoted as saying that a satyagrahi could alienate his properties so as to avoid attachment by the Government. I did not like this, and have stood all along against it. But he said: "It is a man's right to give as much as he can to the country—his person and liberty with or without his property." I beg still to differ.

In 1929, it may be remembered, there was a strong feeling in the country that Gandhiji should preside over the Lahore session of the Congress. Motilalji was anxious to have Jawaharlal in succession to himself. Gandhiji declined, and Jawaharlal presided. There was another incident relevant to the subject. In Bengal there were differences amongst Congressmen, and I was asked to enquire into them. I went to Calcutta, but Subhash Babu and Kiran Shanker Roy boycotted the enquiry after the first sitting of five hours. Subhash Babu said at the Lahore session before the Working Committee that he had objected to my enquiry from the outset, but Motilalji repudiated the statement. Subhash Babu, to prove his statement, quoted a paragraph from the Notes in the issue of *Janmabhumi*, the English weekly edited by me, which ran as follows:

"Talks tend to be freer and franker, the more compact the bodies to which they are confined. One should expect, therefore, that conversations in a body like the Working Committee would be exchange of feelings, while in an informal Conference of the A.I.C.C. they would be only exchange of thoughts, but when the A.I.C.C. formally met and moved resolutions they were merely exchange of words and even enumeration of hands. Gandhi, it must be owned, had a hard time of it all through. If he had readily consented to preside, they would have said that this old man had an impossible cult, and while he could not bring Swaraj he would not allow others to bring it. It is so near at hand, and what cussedness should it be,—be it on the



During this same visit he told me he had received a long complaint against me. I wanted to be confronted with the complainant. The complaint related to my having resigned from the management of the Andhra Jatheeya Kalasala. The complainant was sent for, and both parties sat on either side of Gandhiji who was stretched on a cot on my terrace. While declaring that the complainant had no right to ask for my co-operation except on my terms, Gandhiji added: "Dr. Patabhi has many virtues but lacks humility." This gentle but firm reprimand had a profound effect on me; and I may with humility claim that I gave no more room thereafter for complaint on the score of its absence.

In February, 1930, when the salt satyagraha was contemplated, Gandhiji asked me at Ahmedabad, after the meeting of the Working Committee was over, why I was silent all along. I said that I felt like a motor-driver driving the car in the fog who could see but ten or twenty yards ahead—not farther, until he advanced and could see another twenty yards. He was greatly pleased and said: "That is it."

I was taken into the Working Committee in June, 1929. In April, 1931, at the Karachi session, Gandhiji asked each member of the Working Committee about the personnel of the Committee for the next year—putting name by name out of a list, and to each of these names I said: "Yes, he must be taken." Then he asked me: "You have said 'yes' to each name; then what about yours?" I said I must clear out, and I did. When Jamnalalji pressed for the inclusion of C. R.'s name in the Committee, Gandhiji said: "C. R. and Patabhi are our men. The Working Committee can invite them." That very night he issued instructions that both C. R. and myself should be invited to the Committee meetings. He then put me as the convenor of the Flag Committee and a member of the Fundamental Rights Committee.

At the same session of the Congress Gandhiji asked each member of the Working Committee as to how many should constitute the deputation to the Round Table Conference in London. Almost all said 'fifteen'; and I too

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

You have placed me in a most awkward position by sending two young men without notice, without any pots, without bedding. We have hardly settled down here. There is not enough accommodation for our requirements. Is it fair to dump down people in an institution? Supposing others followed your example, where would I be?

We have not yet begun to entertain learners. There is little to teach. I have taken them and told them they will work as scavengers and labourers as we all do consistently with our other duties. Only please do not repeat the performance.

If you can get money from their homes or from friends, send me enough for their return fares and initial expenses.

How do you pass you time?

Wardha,  
3-4-35.

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi

This took away my breath. It stunned me. I sent Rs. 20 on 7-4-35 by money order at once myself as a *prāyashchitta*, and apologized for having sent anyone to see an ashram—not to live there. I regretted that I should have been the cause of making him really angry for the first time in my experience of him, and explained the real character and purpose of my letter. To this day I deplore the incident. Later, I must admit, when I repeated my apologies, he strove to put me at ease; for, five days later, he wrote:

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

The young men are not going back unless the life here disquiets them. Strange food, strange climate. If their friends can find money, I should like the return fares in case of need and some for their bedding. They are under Miraben's charge.

Wardha,  
8-4-35.

Yours,  
Bapu

By this time I had already sent the money.

In 1936 I opposed the Working Committee's resolution to postpone the decision on the question of acceptance of office, and I was cut out of the Committee after the Lucknow session (1936). I diverted my attention to a study of the States' people's lot, and visited nearly forty

The Gandhi Seva Sangh used to meet year after year at different places for its annual conferences, before it was virtually wound up. On 31-3-38 it met at Delang (Orissa) near Cuttack. I attended it, and paid a visit to Gandhiji one day and wore a chaddar which had a rent. The moment I saw him and took my seat, he wrote down a slip and passed it on to me. It stated: "I do not admire the big rent in your scarf. It is no sign of poverty. It is a sign of no wife, bad wife, or laziness."

I at once replied that the scarf was awaiting treatment by division into two towels, each towel making later two pillow covers, each of which would in due course become two kerchiefs which ultimately would become two drapers for babies and then meet their end.

In 1938, at Haripura, Gandhiji was good enough to invite me to a talk on the States' people's problem; and that led to the Haripura compromise finally. I was taken back into the Working Committee in February, 1938 at Haripura. In December, 1938, there was a meeting at Bardoli at which it was decided, as I learnt later, to request Maulana Azad to stand for the presidentship of the Tripuri session. He at last agreed. After he had left Bardoli I, who was detained by Gandhiji in Bardoli for reasons not known to me, expressed my desire to return, as I had urgent Congress work to attend to in Andhra. He summoned me at 8-30 p.m. finally, and asked me whether the Sardar had spoken to me. I said: "No." Then he said: "I wanted to place this crown of thorns on your head if the Maulana did not agree. But fortunately he gave his assent yesterday morning." "The crown of thorns is always on your head really, on whosoever head you may place it," I replied, and left Bardoli. The subsequent story was interesting. The Maulana withdrew his candidature, and pressed me in Bombay to retract the earlier withdrawal by me of mine. I returned home with this unsought for crown hovering over my head; and as soon as I returned home, I had a telegram from Bardoli to go there again. When I went there I was asked to draw up a statement relating to my 'stopgap' candidature. I did so. But Gandhiji

was crossed. The decision taken was a momentous one. Members were bidding farewell to Gandhiji, and I too bade good-bye. But while all the members were still there, he said: "You want to go too! Do you know we have not even exchanged glances?" I replied saying that I would stay on if I was desired to. This put out Gandhiji who curtly replied: "You may stay if you like. I do not ask you to stay." On more occasions than one I heard or saw him grow angry. But this was the harshest occasion. I swallowed the bitter pill, cancelled my journey, and stayed on in Wardha to meet him the next day. What happened the next day has become a chapter of politics which is too recent to be incorporated into history or even into reminiscences.

Masulipatam,  
18-10-1945.

A few days later, I mentioned my desire to meet this interesting personality to the proprietress of another vegetarian restaurant which I frequented. It was my lucky day. She responded immediately. "That's easy," she said; "come to my 'at home' tomorrow night. He always comes, and I will introduce you to him." So we met, and the meeting changed the current of both our lives. I did not then know, as I came to know later when I had become closely associated with him, that, being himself an ardent vegetarian, Gandhiji had largely helped to finance these two restaurant-keepers, and when subsequently they failed in business, he lost heavily thereby.

Strangely enough, my real card of introduction to him was not that of a journalist, but because I was almost the only other person he had met who had read a book on the subject of nature-cure of disease by one Adolf Just, entitled *Return to Nature*. Upon learning this, he welcomed me with open arms, and we had a long talk on this and cognate subjects. He was interested in my vegetarianism and was delighted to learn that, like himself, I was an ardent admirer of Tolstoy. "I have a shelf full of his books at my office. Come and look at them," he said. I took the opportunity of his cordial invitation to ask for an early appointment, in order to learn from him more of the Indian question and of India, and to make a certain suggestion that I had been turning over in my mind for some time.

Gandhiji was then practising as an attorney (solicitor) of the Transvaal High Court. Though a barrister of the Inner Temple, he had chosen a branch of legal practice which brought him into direct contact with the lay client. I had already heard that he was held in high esteem by his fellow-lawyers and with respect by the Courts before whom he practised. Later I came to know that he would never sue a client for his unpaid fees or take a case involving appearing in Court without first warning the client that he reserved the right to return the "brief" if he should find that the client had been deceiving him. He held strongly that, as an officer of the Court, which had confidence in him, he could be no willing party to deception.

copy of *India: What Can It Teach Us?*, by Professor Max Muller, which I quickly borrowed.

Gandhiji welcomed me pleasantly and with what I presently came to recognise as traditional Indian courtesy. His manner at first was quiet and restrained. As he told me something of the background of the South African Indian question, however, he warmed up. His voice took on a more serious tone when he described some of the hardships and disabilities under which his countrymen lived in this land of their exile. He told me how by their labour, originating in the evil indentured labour emigration system, and by their varied enterprise during nearly half a century, they had helped actively in the country's development and had saved Natal from economic ruin. I may here mention that he felt the tragedy of indentured labour so strongly that when, five years later, he asked the Transvaal Indian community to send me to India to make representations to the Indian Government and people on their behalf, he urged me to do everything possible to get the system brought to an end, at least as regards South Africa. I took his advice very deeply to heart, with the result that, because of Mr. Gokhale's activity on the subject upon the information that I had given to him, Lord Minto's Government did refuse to permit further indentured emigration to Natal in 1910. And I was one of the small band of workers under Gandhiji's leadership, of whom Dinabandhu Andrews was another, who helped Lord Hardinge's Government to end the system altogether ten years later.

Gandhiji, in those early days, had a curious hesitation in rapid speech, which took the form of a slightly sibilant in drawing of the breath, as he sought for the right expression. Later, when I had come to know him well enough to do so, I drew his attention to this, and I suggested that it would be useful to correct it in public speech so as not to distract attention from his argument. He promptly took the matter in hand, and the peculiarity soon disappeared.

Throughout our conversation, I never heard him utter one angry word or make an attack upon any individual, though several anti-Indian personalities were mentioned

—of which I learnt indirectly only later—though he had much to say of the self-sacrificing service of others of his countrymen.

Having by now reached the stage of mutual understanding, I felt the time had come to offer him my services as a writer for *Indian Opinion*, though at the time I had no intention of giving up my regular job on the *Critic*. He said that, if I were willing to do so without remuneration, which his paper could not afford, my contributions would be very welcome. As no thought of payment had entered my mind, I told him that I should be proud to do something to help to make the South African Indian question better understood among my own countrymen, both there and in England, with which I had professional contacts, as well as through the recognised organ of the Indian community. So began an editorial association with the paper which lasted till I left South Africa twelve years later.

I recall one interesting early experience of journalistic collaboration with Gandhiji, which has its amusing side. About this time, Paul Kruger, the ex-President of the South African Republic, had died in exile in Europe. He had been Hitler's prototype in describing black men as no better than intelligent apes, who should have no equality with the whites. Now his mortal remains had been brought back to South Africa, to be buried at Pretoria. To me was assigned the task of reporting the funeral proceedings for *Indian Opinion*. Having noted in the paper many printer's errors, I made an urgent request to Gandhiji that he would personally revise the "proof" of my article before publication, which he promised to do. In those days I was rather proud of my "style". My description of the ceremony opened thus: "He is dead and is buried." I thought that this looked impressive. Imagine, then, my horror when, on receipt of the issue containing the article, this is what I read: "He is dead and is *burned*." I wrote to him at once to complain that he had not carried out his promise. I pointed out further that, if any orthodox Boer were to read that his dead hero had been consigned to perdition, it would arouse strong indignation and resentment, which

according to his conviction, whether spiritual or political. "Keep your standards right," he wrote me during my first visit to India, in 1909-10, on behalf of the Indian community. "Everything else will follow, sooner or later." An illustration of his ready regard for another's independence of judgment occurred shortly after I had joined his office, at his own early request. There had appeared in a well-known English magazine an article by a South African journalist in which, unintentionally as I afterwards learnt, he had made several serious misstatements regarding the Indian situation in the Transvaal. I felt that unless these were at once and authoritatively corrected, they would give rise to much misunderstanding in England, which was then still responsible, under the Crown Colony administration, for Transvaal affairs, and the Indian cause would thereby greatly suffer. I urged this vigorously upon Gandhiji, but he seemed unimpressed by my argument. Deeply disappointed, I spent the rest of the day in stony silence, which he noted quietly. Then he sent for me and asked me what was the matter. I told him somewhat curtly, and added that, of course, this was primarily his cause and he must be the judge of what should be done. He gently suggested that, if I felt so strongly about the matter, I should myself send an article in reply. I did so, and to my great satisfaction it was published in London immediately and was later reproduced in the Indian press. It proved to be my first direct introduction to the Indian public, and shortly afterwards I received an urgent invitation to contribute a further article on the subject to a well-known Indian magazine.

It was about this time that Gandhiji amazed me by informing me one day that he had come to the conclusion that *Indian Opinion* should no longer depend upon advertisements for its support. It seemed to me the death-knell of the paper, and I asked him whether that meant that he intended to close it down. "By no means," was his reply. "Let us try to get a substantial increase in the number of subscribers, to make up for what we shall lose by dropping the advertisements." "But," I said, "how are



required to travel. The "coolie lawyer" (by which foolish epithet he was commonly known) was a well-known passenger, as he went about the country on professional or public business, and he generally had the compartment (a first-class one, in those days) to himself. Full of my social and economic enthusiasms, in which he had been much interested but with which he had not always agreed, I handed him a book that I had just finished, and which I felt sure he would much enjoy. Little did I realise how far-reaching would be the consequences! The book was John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Gandhiji always regarded the perusal of this book as one of the great turning points of his life. He describes how he was so fascinated by the book that he could not put it down all night until he had finished it, and he declares that, upon his arrival at Durban, it had changed his outlook for ever. He determined immediately to adopt and to advocate the "simple life", with all its attendant consequences.

He bought a small estate of some 100 acres about twelve miles north of Durban, to which he transferred the printing-press. It was there that the historic Phoenix settlement (significant name!) was established, in the midst of sugar-cane and timber plantations. The colony consisted of Indians and Englishmen, able to rise above racial differences, and willing to live the simplest life, as advocated by Tolstoy and Ruskin, away from urban surroundings and industrial influences, and receiving only a trifling monthly stipend for their barest needs. They were to help to build their own and each other's tiny cottages and to cultivate with their own hands the two-acre plots allotted to each settler and from which they hoped to grow the crops suited for a vegetarian dietary. In addition, they were to undertake, without pecuniary reward, the production of the weekly newspaper.

It was here that Gandhiji later brought his family to live, after giving up his small middle-class home in Johannesburg. Here, too, began those inter-religious exercises which later became so famous. On Sunday the settlers would meet at the Gandhi house, when he was with them.

sions. Though an occasional lecturer to the Lodge on Indian religion and philosophy, Gandhiji was not himself a member of the Society, though, as a Bar student in London, he had become an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge, during H. P. B.'s lifetime and shortly after Dr. Annie Besant had joined the Society. In his *Autobiography*, he recalls that it was two Theosophical brothers who first truly interested him in the *Bhagavadgita*. It was they who probably introduced him to Sir Edwin Arnold, who translated that immortal work in his verse-rendering, *The Song Celestial*. Arnold subsequently became an officer of a branch of the London Vegetarian Society, of which Gandhiji was secretary, at that time. "Rooming" at the same boarding-house in London then was Dr. Josiah Oldfield, the veteran "fruitarian", who told me recently that Gandhiji helped to design the badge of the Vegetarian Society, and it was his own badge that Gandhiji gave me, when I joined his household in Johannesburg.

Gandhiji's prompt and self-sacrificing action in saving *Indian Opinion* from extinction was soon to be amply justified. Within eighteen months of the plague outbreak, which had resulted in the scattering of a large part of the Johannesburg Indian population throughout the Transvaal and had raised the suspicion in the country areas that widespread illicit Indian immigration had occurred, the aggravated political situation came to a head. The paper played a very great part in keeping the community together during the Passive Resistance Struggle, which was about to commence. The leading figures on either side, for nearly eight years, were Gandhiji and General (now Field-Marshal) Jan Christiaan Smuts. And it was from the paper that the chief events of the long struggle, the sacrifice of its Indian participants, men and women alike, and the personality and philosophy of life of its indomitable leader became known to India and to the world at large. As Mr. Gokhale later declared, Gandhiji had shown that he had the supreme gift of making heroes out of common clay.

walk to the jail. If the former, he would have to pay for it. He, however, declined the easier way, and being a practised and easy walker he chose to march the three-quarters of a mile, in broad daylight in his convict suit. Resolutely shouldering his bag, he stepped out smartly, we shamefacedly following at a respectful distance. Later he disappeared behind the grim portals of the Johannesburg Jail, above which was carved in Dutch the motto: "Union Makes Strength". It was exactly Gandhiji's charge to his people at the time. It was his motto to the end.

I recall how, almost exactly forty years before that tragic end, he nearly fell to a murderous assault upon his life by some of his countrymen who had entirely misunderstood the spirit of compromise with which he entered into an arrangement with General Smuts to suspend the Struggle and to undergo voluntary registration, upon the condition that the offending anti-Indian Act should be subsequently repealed. They awaited him as he left his office in order to be the first to offer voluntary registration, ~~but~~ when he refused to go back upon his undertaking, they struck him down. Being a few minutes late for my appointment with him, I just missed being personally involved in the attack, but I saw Gandhiji a little later at the home of the Rev. Joseph J. Doke (the writer of the first book dealing with his life and philosophy, entitled *M. K. Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa*, and arranged for the visit to him of the Registrar of Asiatics to take his application for registration, with fingerprints, before he would allow himself to be medically attended to. It may be added that he refused to give evidence against the culprits when, against his will, they were subsequently prosecuted by the Crown authorities. The evidence that convicted them was given by European eye-witnesses who had come to his rescue.

I may here add that among the books that Gandhiji had with him in jail had been some sent to him by General Smuts himself, who bore no personal animus in causing to be locked up, for the first time, his Indian opponent. On Gandhiji's retirement from South Africa six years later, he

matter brought with it spiritual danger. But in these matters, partly because of my own temperamental unwillingness to resort to physical force, and partly because of his superior authority where, as a Hindu, he was the *guru*, and I, an Englishman and a non-Hindu, was the *chela*, I could not question beyond a certain point.

And yet it is known that, during the first world-war, he took an active part in recruiting fighting soldiers for the Indian Army. Indeed, for the very reason that Shrikrishna had given, I was one of those of his friends who strongly dissuaded him from joining up as such, in order to set an example to others. It was about this time that I received from him a letter in which he wrote as follows:

"What do you say to my recruiting campaign? It is for me a religious activity undertaken for the sacred doctrine of ahimsa. I have made the discovery that India has lost the power to fight—not the inclination. She must regain the power and then, if she will, deliver to a groaning world the doctrine of ahimsa. She must give abundantly out of her strength, not out of her weakness. She may never do it. That to me would mean her effacement. She would lose her individuality and would be like the other nations—a worshipper of brute-force. This recruiting work is perhaps the hardest task yet undertaken by me. I may fail to gain recruits. I shall still have given the best political education to the people."

It is difficult to believe, looking back at the events of recent years, that even Gandhiji would have included indiscriminately all the non-Indian nations engaged in the late conflict as "worshippers of brute-force"!

About 1913 he received an inquiry from India whether he would allow himself to be nominated as President of the next session of the Congress. We discussed the matter, and I told him that I thought that it would be useless his doing so, as his views were, in my opinion, much ahead of Indian opinion at the time, and misunderstanding might result, especially as he could do no more than pay a very short visit to India, in view of the South African circumstances. After consideration, he decided to decline the

him for his great mission. Who can say what might have been the course of political events in India, had the decision been otherwise and he had been obliged to remain in South Africa?

London,  
10-3-1948.

## IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DAYS

*Millie Graham Polak*

MANY of us who knew Gandhiji in the days of long ago were aware that he had long had a deep interest in trying to heal a sick body—not only his own, though with that he was always experimenting, but also that of the many who were near or came to him for help. At one time he might have interested himself in orthodox medical science, though I cannot say that he had ever made any real study of it. But orthodoxy was not for him, for, like all other things in his life, he sought to get back to what was to him the fountain-head of life and health. So he sought to treat an ailment by what was known as nature-cure methods.

After reading Just's *Return to Nature*, in which the author had devised a special simple method of nature-cure, Gandhiji was convinced that here were to be found healing and absence of ills. It was about this time that an unhappy experience made a profound impression upon him, and deepened his suspicion of the orthodox medical schools of thought and practice.

An Indian trader had a dearly loved son, who had become seriously ill. Only an immediate operation, said the doctor in charge of the case, could cure the boy. The operation was not considered to be a serious one, but the father was filled with fear and anxiety. He consented at

ment, in Natal, and Gandhiji was at Johannesburg, in the Transvaal. After having been ailing for some time, she became very ill, and the doctor, who lived twelve miles away, had to be sent for late one night. Upon examination, he found her suffering from a bad attack of pernicious anaemia. He considered her condition so serious that he asked for her husband to be sent for at once. Upon Gandhiji's arrival, and after being closeted with Ba for some time, he told us that she had placed herself entirely in his hands for treatment, and that he was going to look after her himself. The doctor, who had been urging orthodox dietary treatment, which involved breach of the customary vegetarianism, was dispensed with, much to his indignation, and Gandhiji set to work and treat his wife. She was given frequent small quantities of acid fruit and practically no other food at first, and, contrary to the expectations of those of us who feared the consequences of such drastic treatment of a weak and desperately sick woman, the trouble was arrested. After a week or two, simple, non-stimulating food was taken, and Ba commenced to improve. In due course, a complete cure was effected.

In those days, Gandhiji accepted cow's milk as a valuable food, though already he was saying that it was not a proper food for adults. Presently, he insisted that it stimulated the lower passions of man's nature. This line of argument aroused strong opposition in me. "If that be so," I said, "then young children, who are principally fed on milk, would be nothing but horrible little brutes, and you do not certainly believe that to be the case." However, he smiled tolerantly. Neither of us believed that the other was right. Shortly afterwards he took a vow never to drink again the milk of the cow and the buffalo.

Since those days, doctors and surgeons played a bigger part in Gandhiji's life. Even his fasts had to be carefully watched by his medical advisers, and probably only such medical care enabled him to retain for so long a hold on his physical body. And, too, he later learnt to distinguish between the moral consequences of taking cow's milk and

efforts to preserve his health. Nothing was ever too small for Gandhiji, and the more menial the task, the greater dignity he imparted to it by his own great earnestness and simplicity.

In our talks in the South African days, I came to realise that Gandhiji believed very intensely that man's essential nature was divine, and that if it were to be allowed to develop naturally from birth, the divine in him would expand as a flower and his natural wisdom would grow and manifest direct from God. This being his profound belief, it is understandable that education, in its ordinary sense, namely, the imparting of information along scholastic lines, was of secondary importance to him. Many were the arguments that I had with him. Yet we did have a little school at the Phoenix Settlement for a short time, which the children of the settlers attended. The teaching was very rudimentary and amateurish, for the teachers were without much training or skill. Nevertheless, it was something in the right direction, and Gandhiji was interested in the work.

A question that troubled him somewhat during this period was how to convey the right kind of sex-knowledge to the children under his influence as they were reaching puberty. He realised that children growing up in a free life close to nature might misunderstand the right use of the procreative faculties and that experimenting and abuses might easily take place. At length he procured what at that time were regarded as standard works on what a boy and a girl should know and how they should be informed. The then teacher at the school was an unmarried woman, so Gandhiji did not feel that he could ask her advice on the books without embarrassing her. Being the only other Englishwoman there, and a married woman, he asked me to help him. Soon after, owing to his rapid immersion in the political struggle, the little school was closed, and nothing further was done in the matter.

London,  
12-3-1948.

we accompanied them to the Italian frontier at two hours' notice. It was during that journey in the train that he asked us why we did not visit India. We replied that the journey was too expensive.

"You probably think in terms of first or second class," he explained laughing, "but we only pay ten pounds each for our passage on deck and, once there, many Indian friends would open their houses to you."

We counted how much money we had in our pockets, and decided to seize the opportunity. We stayed in the train, went to Rome with the party and, there, got the visa and the tickets. We had no luggage, except a tooth-brush and an umbrella, but we bought some bedding at Rome and sent a few telegrams to cancel lectures. Such an adventure is only offered once in a lifetime.

The journey on the S. S. Pilsna was wonderful. We all slept in row on deck, and Gandhiji was very jolly, full of wit, and very kindly teaching us about Indian ways, Indian food, and taking trouble for his friends' comfort with a real mother's heart.

They say that a great man is never great to his servant, and that illusions fall when you live near him. Well, Gandhiji is an exception to the rule, and he is still greater when you are his companions day and night. His humour and his kindness are unforgettable. We spent three weeks in close intimacy, sharing all the details of daily routine on deck, even cleaning our common corner when the dogs of the first class passengers invaded it, and we found the Mahatma great as ever.

He does not impose an overwhelming or crushing personality on you as other great men often do. He just makes the atmosphere absolutely honest and clear by his presence and his love of truth. Who could ever lie to such a guide and friend, a real brother of men?

These three weeks with him on the S. S. Pilsna were a rare privilege, and such an introduction to India was unique. Gandhiji's love of his people is boundless, but never blind. Many times he repeated that his mission was to accustom men to use a better method than war in their



police arrest him on the roof of his host's house, and two very tall officers standing on both sides of the stairs with tears in their eyes. We shall never forget that scene. Even then he found time to scribble a few words of general introduction for us, a sort of Indian passport on a precious scrap of paper. It opened all doors through India and, while he was in jail, at Poona, in that winter of 1932, we found his spirit and his inspiration alive everywhere from North to South. Travelling third class and wearing khaddar, we made hundreds of friends in the trains.

Two testimonials impressed us specially. A woman with white hair explained why she and so many of her sisters had come out of their homes to take part in the Gandhi-led movement, much against old customs: "We felt that he would never ask us to do anything against love or truth."

In Calcutta, the great Poet of India, Rabindranath Tagore, told us what he thought was Gandhiji's greatest achievement: "He taught our people to cast away fear and so to free themselves from hatred and hypocrisy, for both go together."

The world owes a deep debt of gratitude to India for having chosen such a leader and shown mankind a way out of war in following his prophetic vision.

Neuchatel (Switzerland),  
25-3-1946.

Bombay. Panditji, half jocularly, remarked: "He will have to give this up now;" and Gandhiji, without waiting for me to say a word, rejoined: "He will do it more thoroughly than many, but he will only do it when he is convinced of our line of action being the correct one." As Revashankarbhai said good-bye to me at the threshold of the staircase of the second floor of his building, he asked if I felt that the interview had been a useful one. I replied in all earnestness: "It is a serious move and will require to be watched at every turn."

My next interview with Gandhiji was in 1921 immediately after the landing of the Prince of Wales at Bombay when commotion took place in Bombay and Gandhiji went on fast. It was decided that, when Gandhiji was to break his fast, a few friends should be present. I was specially invited to this, and there were a few speeches requesting Gandhiji to break the fast and assuring him of the loyalty of all India to him. At the end of these speeches, he asked me to say a few words. This took me by surprise, as nothing in that direction was indicated to me. But on his repeating his request, I referred to what I felt was most lacking in Indian public life or private, namely discipline. A few friends from the Congress circle were upset by my few words, but I was given to understand that Mahatmaji said to them: "Purshotamdas touched the correct thing, and I am glad he said it on this occasion."

Gandhiji's father had been Dewan of Rajkot; and during the agitation against that State, which developed just before the Tripuri session of the Congress over which Subhash Babu presided, Gandhiji decided to follow Kasturba who had gone to Rajkot, having been brought up at Rajkot though her birth-place was Porbandar. When I heard about this, I particularly asked friends in Bombay to arrange that I should be able to see Gandhiji in Bombay on his way to Rajkot. It was a Monday, his silence day, and he was to be in Bombay only for a few hours. As soon as he learnt that I was anxious to see him, he very kindly sent a message back saying that he would start his silence an hour or two later, so that I might go

very few who, instead of enquiring of me as to the why and wherefor of my illness, kept on talking to me merrily, as if bracing me to the course of recovery. He left me after twenty minutes, and the nurse in attendance, who saw him for the first time, said: "If only I could be sure that patients would have such visitors calling on them, they would do more for a patient's recovery than doctors themselves."

Bombay,  
July 1946.

## SINCE MY STUDENT DAYS

*T. S. S. Rajan*

VANITY is a part of human nature. We always like to exhibit ourselves to our best advantage, particularly when we happen to be on view. True greatness rarely exhibits itself in such a way. God's good man never seeks occasions to display his good nature. It is inherent in him. This was the lesson I learnt when I happened to meet Mahatma Gandhi, a plain Mr. Gandhi, South Africa's Indian barrister Gandhi if you like it, in about the year 1909 in London. I was merely a medical student—one of the many that flocked to the London University even in those days. I had no occasion to know or see Mr. Gandhi. Like many young men, I felt I was intensely patriotic if I joined any movement, national in outlook, which had for its motive the freedom of India. To have the courage to talk of Indian freedom in those days was a great patriotic act, and I had a great veneration for those young men who talked loudly of revolution leading to freedom for India. A handful as we were, we became a dreaded lot in the Indian world that lived and moved about in London.

well on into the evening when he helped us to lay the tables and the plates, and serve the dinner we had prepared. At long last after strenuous work of hours did he consent to sit at the head of the table and preside over the function. At the beginning of his speech, a very simple and hesitant one, he told us how pleased he was to see us tuck up our sleeves and do the work in the way we had done. He said he knew the difficult task we had undertaken, and was agreeably surprised to know that the Indian students in London, sons of well-to-do parents, did not consider it mean to serve their fellow-men in the way we had done, and that it augured well for the future of our land. He spoke of many other things besides, but I have forgotten them all now. What persists in my mind even at this distance of time is the picture of my first meeting the Mahatma in the underground kitchen cellar of a London restaurant. I have often been a prisoner in the jails of our country during the many occasions of the satyagraha struggle conducted by Gandhiji; and during all those occasions I have found myself voluntarily working in the kitchen. During our last internment, Rajaji made a casual remark about me, saying: "Rajan, how is it that I find you gravitating to the kitchen whenever you happen to be imprisoned?" Has Gandhiji's example in the kitchen cellar in London got into my blood and stuck there? I do not know. But I do remember I found greatness in the Mahatma of the future years, long before the world knew of him.

(2) I had an impression that Mahatma Gandhi did not care for money, and did not worry himself about losing it if it so happened. It was one of the impossible, crowded meetings usually held in Tamil Nad whenever Gandhiji happens to be the guest of the evening—one of the many visits he has paid to Karaikudi, the chief town of Chettinad in Ramnad district. The reception committee had made elaborate arrangements for receiving Gandhiji. A decorated *mandap* in a huge open space had attracted the crowd long before the arrival of the guest. As often happens, thousands had besieged the approach to

went away to Puri for a holiday, and Rajkumar Shukul took him at Patna to my house where there was nobody except a servant. Not knowing who he was and taking him to be some villager who had come there as a client (I was then practising as a lawyer), he did not pay any attention to him and put him up in some room where such people used to be put up. He was there for a few hours. When people in the town came to know about his visit, the late Mazharul Huq took him to his own house from where Gandhiji left the same evening for Champaran. The town of Muzaffarpur falls on the way to Champaran from Patna, and so he stopped at Muzaffarpur where Acharya Kripalani was a professor in the G. B. B. College. The train arrived there at midnight. Acharya Kripalani had been informed that he was coming, and so he was at the station with some of his students to receive him. He stayed at Muzaffarpur for two days with Prof. Malkani.

The rayats in Champaran had been so badly treated oppressed for a long time that they were afraid even complaining against the planters to a magistrate or to any Government official. A story was related that when a rayat took courage to approach a magistrate, the men of the planters used to drag him out even from the presence of the magistrate in court and give him a beating, to be followed by various other kinds of harassment. The rayats, therefore, were afraid even of lodging a complaint. But as soon as the news that Karmavir Gandhi of the South African fame was coming to help them, after the return of Rajkumar Shukul from the Lucknow Congress, somehow or other a change came over many of them. By the time he reached Muzaffarpur the news had gone ahead of him, and many tenants of Champaran came to see him at Muzaffarpur. When he reached Motihari, the headquarter of the district, there was a crowd to receive him at the railway station. When on the day following his arrival he started to visit a village, from where intimation of looting and arson by planters' men of villagers had reached him, he was asked by the District Magistrate to see him, and was served with a notice to

obeyed the order and was prepared to take the severest penalty that the magistrate could impose, the magistrate had adjourned the case for four or five days for passing orders. The magistrate had expected that there would be legal arguments, and that witnesses would have to be examined and cross-examined, and then argument for the prosecution and for the defence and so on. The trial started in the usual way; but as soon as the prosecuting pleader had started examining a witness, Gandhiji said it was unnecessary to call witnesses as he was ready with a statement admitting that he had disobeyed the order. When he read it out the magistrate did not know what to do. The statement did not say in so many words that he pleaded guilty. It was one of those magnificent statements with which the country became familiar in course of time but which was altogether extraordinary and unfamiliar then. The magistrate pointed out that it did not amount to a plea of guilty, and so he would have to go through the formality of examining witnesses. As a matter of fact the magistrate <sup>58</sup> was not like such a speedy conclusion of this trial as he was not prepared to deliver a sentence then and there. So he put forward this plea that the statement did not amount to a plea of guilty. But Gandhiji was not prepared to allow the proceedings to be prolonged; and so he said that, if the magistrate insisted, he would plead guilty. The magistrate then had no option but to pass a sentence. He said he would pass sentence two hours later, and asked Gandhiji to furnish a bail which he refused to do. Ultimately the magistrate let him go without any bail on promise that he would attend when required. Gandhiji waited there; and when the two hours were over, the magistrate said he would deliver the judgment some days later.

Gandhiji had returned from court, after this trial, to his residence when we arrived there. I had of course heard how he had been taken to my house and how my servant had treated him, and was naturally abashed. When my name was mentioned to him as one of the new arrivals, he simply laughed and stated that he had been to my house in Patna in my absence. Without going into formali-

acceptable to them. But they thought, amongst themselves, that Gandhiji was totally a stranger, and yet he was prepared to go to prison for the sake of the rayats; if, they, on the other hand, being not only residents of adjoining districts but also those who claimed to have served these rayats, should go home, it would be a shameful desertion. Ultimately they made up their minds to go to prison. They conveyed this decision to him just when he was going to court. He was very much pleased, and at once said that the battle in Champaran was won. When the question was put to us we did not know all this, and so we took a little time to consider and to consult those friends who had been with him from before. They related to us the whole story as to how they had arrived at the stage when they expressed their preparedness to court imprisonment. All of us now gathered for consultation, and had of course no difficulty after this in coming to the same conclusion. We told him that, and he was pleased. He was a pukka businessman. He at once took a piece of paper and a pencil and took down the names of all of us. He divided us into batches of two each, and put down the order in which each batch would disobey the order. There were some days still intervening before the date fixed for the judgment. We were permitted to go home, settle our affairs and return; and the first batch, which was to consist of Mazharul Huq Saheb and Babu Brijkishore, was expected to be ready on the date of the judgment. It was this very first incident which left on his mind a very favourable impression about Bihar, and he was never tired of repeating how happy he was and how he had acquired such confidence in Bihar.

The inquiry into the grievances of the rayats proceeded, and after some time he was summoned by the Lieutenant-Governor to meet him. We had, in the meantime, collected a great deal of evidence in support of their complaints. We had examined something like 20 to 25 thousand witnesses, taking down statements in full of about ten thousand and summary of the rest. We had also collected thousands of documents which we had sorted and classified, and we knew

prestige; and therefore we need not entertain any apprehension that the rayats would submit to the planters any more. He saw clearly that it would not be profitable for the planters to remain there if they could not exact illegal perquisites, and when the rayats had learnt to refuse to pay what was not legally payable, the planters' game would be up. This turned out to be literally true. Although he had given up the demand of the rayats to the extent of 75 per cent in the compromise, the planters left Champaran within a few years after his visit; and at places where there used to stand their well-furnished bungalows, well-kept gardens and big stables the rayats have now got their houses, and every inch of land which the planters had in their possession has passed to the rayats. This process had started by 1920-21 when Gandhiji initiated the non-cooperation movement; and no wonder those of us who had the privilege to be associated with him in Champaran, had seen his work and his method and the achievement, could easily foresee that the same process would be repeated on a tremendously big scale in India if only we remained true to his principles and followed his lead. He was in Champaran for seven or eight months at one continuous stretch before the report of the Commission was submitted; and no less than a year's time was taken before the legislation incorporating the recommendations was passed and the end of the planters' oppression commenced. It has taken some thirty years to complete the work of gaining freedom for India, but it has come, and that more or less in the same imperceptible way. Whenever Gandhiji appeared to compromise with the British Government or to withdraw any of the movements which he had started, people used to find fault with him just as some had done in Champaran; but we know the result now.

I will mention one or two instances of those early days of my association with him which have left a deep impression on my mind. When Mr. Charlie Andrews got the information about his prosecution in Champaran he came to Motihari. He was about to go to the Fiji Island a few days later, and came just to see Gandhiji



of his work in the Legislative Council of which he was a member. One I.C.S. magistrate, an Englishman, who later became the Governor of a province, used to have very friendly talks with Gandhiji about his South African experience, his non-violence, and kindred subjects. But he used also to send very alarming reports to the Government about the situation. In one of these reports he had drawn a very lurid picture of how on account of the presence of Gandhiji an atmosphere had been created of disregard for law, that the British Government had ceased to function in that part of the country, and that Gandhiji was looked upon as the person to whom complaints could be carried even against the magistrate and the Government, and so forth. The idea of course was that the Government should take some action and remove him from there. But he was fair enough to send the report to Gandhiji for his comments which, he said, he would forward along with it to the Government. The note also mentioned that the paper was to be treated as confidential. Gandhiji never kept anything back from us. So he did not like to keep this document from us, and he wrote to the magistrate in reply that by confidential he meant that the document would not be published, but that he could not keep it from his co-workers without whose help and consultation he was unable to do anything. So if the magistrate wanted any document not to be shown to us, he should not send it to him because he could not see anything which he could not show to us. We did not like his writing this, because we felt that, if the magistrate acted according to his suggestion, even Gandhiji would not have any information about what was passing between local officials and the Government, and this might hamper our work. We would rather forego the temptation of knowing all that happened, and would be satisfied if Gandhiji knew how the official mind was working so that he might take decisions with full knowledge. But Gandhiji said that this would not be right. It would be wrong to let the magistrate remain under the impression that nobody saw these documents when as a matter of fact we were reading them,

great deal in connection with recruitment which was then going on for the war. As a result he was taken very seriously ill. From Bombay I went to Ahmedabad to see him. He was then living in a big house in the city. I stayed there for a few days. He was not feeling very happy in that house, and was insisting that he should move to the Sabarmati ashram. The ashram had been opened while he was in Champaran. There were just a few rooms which had then been built, and he wanted to shift there leaving the big palatial house in the city. All friends and doctors felt that his stay in the city was more convenient both because of the house and because doctors and others were more easily available although he was not taking any medicine. One afternoon he was very insistent. I had gone away to see the city, and on my return I found that he had gone to the ashram. So I followed him there, and I learnt that, although he had high temperature, they could not induce him to stay, and so he had to be taken to the ashram. I was to leave the next day, and I went to his room early in the morning. He was then very weak and looked much distressed. When I told him that I would be going, he kept quiet for some time and then began to talk. He said he had insisted upon coming to the ashram in spite of his high temperature because he was feeling very unhappy in that big palace. Then he related how he had been keeping awake and revolving in his mind all the time his own life and activities and how distressed he was. He had started so many projects, but had not completed anything to his satisfaction. How would he fit in with a big palace like that? How could he live there? and so on. He had started work amongst the mill-labourers of Ahmedabad, but before it made any progress he had to take up something else. He had thought of starting the ashram and had made arrangements for it when he was called away to Champaran. He had hoped to finish the work in Champaran in a few days and to go back by the time fixed for the opening of the ashram. This he could not do as he was held up there for months. In Champaran he had succeeded in getting some relief for the rayats, but to

There is a tax called the chaukidari tax which almost every villager has to pay. It is a small tax, but it is regarded as an oppressive one by the poorer people. There is always a great amount of discontent against it. So I suggested to Gandhiji in the course of argument that he should permit us in Bihar to refuse to pay the chaukidari tax rather than to disobey the salt laws. He said we would be beaten in the very first round if we did that; if, however, we succeeded in disobeying the salt laws, we might try it afterwards; but even then it was doubtful whether we would succeed. I was not convinced but I obeyed, and we started the salt campaign. It was so very successful in Bihar that there was hardly any corner of the province where the law was not openly and defiantly disobeyed. The same thing happened all over the country, and all sceptics realised the strength behind the movement and how he had laid down this apparently innocuous programme which had created such mass energy. After we had disobeyed these salt laws for some months the rainy season came, and it became physically impossible to do anything by way of disobeying salt laws. I therefore advised that the Bihar people should start non-payment of the chaukidari tax. They did it, but the Government came down upon them with such tremendous force that in many places they succumbed; and had not the Gandhi-Irwin truce come, we would have been beaten.

I could mention many instances, but I would stop here.

Wardha,  
12-4-1948.

so much of the humiliation of Indians in their own country (and often in England, too) that it had given me positive pleasure, as I well remember, to find the tables turned on the Englishman—even though the Englishman happened to be myself!

But “Bapu” could not look at it that way. I’m afraid he mistook my ironical glee for charity, giving me credit for it in his letter—“and it is right,” he said, “for us all to be so towards one another. But the hideous truth is that this bar is a variety of the curse of untouchability....” For the rest, this letter warned me against being “greedy about doing many things at once.” He wanted me, he said, to “do some things at least well.” This referred to things taught at the Ashram.

I have next two undated letters, evidently written between Gandhiji’s return to the Ashram, at the end of November, 1929, and his departure for Wardha (to which place I accompanied him, and later to Lahore for that memorable meeting of the Congress). One of the two notes is concerned with the welfare and comfort of some guests—two Americans who were coming to Sabarmati for a day or two. Written on a “Silence Day”, this note expressed “Bapu’s” anxiety that “they should have the necessary creature comforts supplied to them so long as it is in our power to do so.” Would I act as “co-host” with Sitla Sahai “and see that they do not feel strangers in a strange place?”

Only those who remember the pressure of work under which such notes were written will fully appreciate their value. Never too busy to be the perfect host and—in the best sense—the perfect gentleman (as my own father would have used that word) he had time for every child in the Ashram. Perhaps the second of these undated notes (also written on a “Silence Day”) best illustrates this attention to the small needs of others. “Bapu” had passed me, coming from his bath, and noticed that my nose was bleeding. The few lines he wrote were by way of advice as to what to do about it!

The next letter was received on February 2nd, 1930.

helping with *Young India*, and on April 24th he asked: "How will you feel about *Young India* now Mahadev is off?" (i.e. in prison).

In the letter of March 13th "Bapu" had written of the Ashram: "I am anxious for it to become an abode of peace, purity and strength. You I hold to be a gift from God for the advancement of that work." Less than three weeks later (31-3-'30) he was compelled to write in a very different strain. Untruthful statements and attacks on his character had deeply embittered me, and I had "let myself go" in an attack on one of his traducers. My article had appeared in the *Bombay Chronicle*.

"I did not like your writing in the *Chronicle*," wrote "Bapu", "it is not ahimsa.....When you have a good cause never descend to personalities..... So you see what I want to emphasise is not merely bad manners. It is the underlying violence that worries me. Is this not quite clear to you? If it is, I would like you to promise yourself never to write any such thing without submitting it to someone in whose non-violence you have faith." He also asked me to apologise to the man whom I had attacked. I was only 24 and very hot-headed. Many years were to pass before I began to appreciate fully the teachings of the Mahatma—or (indeed) the Quaker view of life to which I had been brought up. But I am glad to remember that such was my love for "Bapu" that I wrote that apology, which was kindly received. I remember that I deliberately "rubbed it in" that I apologised at "Bapu's" request, so that the man to whom I wrote might know the magnanimity of the Great Soul whose integrity he had queried. The fact evidently impressed this man, as it had impressed me.

A letter of April 14th speaks again of this matter. "Bapu" was "delighted" to have my letter—evidently expressing regret and reporting on the fact that I had written the apology. "There is no question of restoration of confidence," he wrote, "for it was never lost." (Not unreasonably that had been my fear, and I had expressed it). He spoke of the "slow and sometimes painful process" of assimilating ahimsa. There was a mental violence that

After that there is a long silence, broken only by a post-card in 1935, saying that he had written to an English friend whom I had recommended to him as he was going out to India. "Why don't you tell me something about yourself?" he asked. The reason was that I had drifted a long way from his gentle teachings, and did not like to say so. By 1938 I had moved even further from his way of thinking. But out of respect and affection for "Bapu" I wrote to him on one matter about which I felt that I wished him to know directly from me, and not at second-hand. It is not a matter that I need discuss here, but I blessed him indeed for some words in his reply (dated 14-4-'38). "My heart goes out to you," his letter began. "What does it matter that on some things we don't see eye to eye?" And then, at the end, he wrote: "The fact that you are a seeker of truth is enough to sustain the bond between us." The letter was written in his own hand, on a train, and signed "Love from us all, Bapu". We had never been further apart in thought and in our objectives; yet he could write these unforgettable words of true comradeship and affection.

Nevertheless I am happy to be able to turn to one more letter. The long war years had intervened, during which I had written very little to friends abroad, and not at all (as far as I remember) to "Bapu". I had felt too hopeless of such correspondence when all that was most important was likely to be deleted by the censor. If one wrote, it was with a feeling of omitting deliberately what mattered most, of prying eyes that read what remained, and of considerable doubt whether a letter would arrive at all, "enemy action" being liable to intercept it at any point. But those years were for me years of re-thinking my own "pacifism", which I still believe had been for years very clear-headed in its analysis of the political and economic factors that contributed to peace or war. What it had long lacked was spiritual vision, with the human understanding, the tolerance and charity that I might have learnt from the greatest man of our time. In fact for years I had been anti-war, but not really a pacifist at all.

are so intimately linked with it that it would be valueless to quote them without explaining the circumstances in which they were written. In the most critical period of my own life the writings of John Woolman (in my view the greatest of the Quaker "saints") confirmed and gave form to the new faith by which I have since tried to live. But, growing unseen, unnoticed, like flowers in a garden of weeds, my memories of "Bapu" were certainly the principal means by which that faith first came into being. Things said, written and done by "Bapu" stirred in my mind and moved my heart even when we seemed furthest apart in our ideas. A Hindu was therefore the chief instrument of my re-conversion to Christianity. For this alone I am eternally in debt to the Great Soul of Mohandas Gandhi. As I continue to learn from him, the debt will grow greater with the passing years.

London,  
4-4-1948.

## HIS DAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA

*L. W. Ritch*

IT is a far cry from 1946 back to somewhere about 1895 when I first met Gandhiji in person. He had already become famous as champion of the claims of his Natal countrymen, and I, as one interested in the welfare of the non-European peoples and their disabilities, and being also an eager student of Hindu philosophy, opened up correspondence with him. The outcome of our exchange of letters was Gandhiji's invitation to visit him at his home near the Bayside, Durban. This I was able to do not very long after, and I may perhaps be allowed to add that this contact I was thus privileged to make was doubtless one of the most important milestones in my life.

the Transvaal British Indian Committee. Gandhiji was ever a glutton for exercise.

His forgiveness of dear old Jamadar Mir Alam for the assault committed on him by that misguided zealot has, I believe, already been told. I recall it only to mention that this to my knowledge was but one of Gandhiji's "Go thou, and sin no more!" reactions to the wrong-doer.

This very incomplete tale of reminiscences will perhaps most fittingly be concluded by reference to what constituted Gandhiji's most outstanding characteristic. He was always the Servant, the Server.

At the many banquets and receptions given, from time to time, to prominent visitors and actual or prospective champions of the cause Gandhiji's rôle was invariably that of the menial, the helper in the kitchen, the waiter upon the guests, never in the 'front row', never courting the limelight, always identifying himself with "the least of these", the humblest and lowliest, even as he does today with the Harijans. If ever any man dignified and truly interpreted the word 'Servant', it was he. No wonder he compelled the respect, if not the love, of all who knew him.

For myself, my own debt to Gandhiji can never be repaid. The relationship to him of us lesser ones was, perhaps, never better expressed than by the late Herman Kallenbach. He was accustomed to address Gandhiji as 'Upper House' and to subscribe himself as 'Lower House'.

"For their work continueth,  
And their work continueth,  
Deep and long continueth,  
Better than this knowing."

Johannesburg,  
25-3-1946.



Friday, the 11th; there, too, that the morning and evening prayers will usually be held; there that, seated at his spinning wheel, he will receive the many visitors of all races and all strata who will stream in ceaselessly. His son Devadas, his disciples and secretaries, Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal, and the devoted Mira supervising everything, will share the other rooms.

Henceforth, letters, telegrams, messages, telephone calls (the latter, fortunately, received only at the Villa Olga) will keep up uninterruptedly. Now it is Lausanne reminding the Mahatma of his promise to address several meetings; then, Geneva, notified of his visit later, feeling desperate at having to take second place and claiming the immediate presence of Gandhi at a large public meeting; then there are all the press correspondents, most of them ignorant enough of the real life and teaching of the master; and above all come all the fervent admirers of non-violence (amidst whom, of course, there are a few prompted by curiosity) requesting interviews and vying with each other in offering the greatest service. Two reverend fathers place their car at the disposal of Gandhi during the entire period of his stay; a young musician, every morning at dawn, plays the violin under his windows; a Japanese artist comes hurrying from Paris to make sketches; school children bring him flowers; and on the eve of his departure the choir of Villeneuve will sing popular songs in the garden, including the celebrated *Ranz des Vaches* (Calling the Herd), that song which even more than the national anthem touches the heart of every Swiss away from his motherland, arousing patriotic love coupled with a feeling of home-sickness. And let me not forget to mention the Syndicate of the Milkmen of Lemman who, even before Gandhi's arrival, had phoned to express their desire to supply milk to the "King of India"!

Amidst that seeming confusion, Gandhiji remains calm and smiling, punctual at every one of the engagements he makes, and yet managing, somehow, at dawn or during any moment of leisure in the course of the day, to slip out

full power of non-violence. Yet he understands that to convince sceptical Europe the concrete example of a successful experiment in non-violence would be necessary. Will India furnish it? He hopes so.....Many are the burning topics that are touched upon during these intimate talks, in the course of which the two speakers open their hearts without any reservation. At times their conclusions vary; yet always they commune with each other through their common love for humanity, their identical desire to alleviate its misery, their fervent search for Truth in its multiplicity of aspects.

On Tuesday the 8th and on Thursday the 10th, the Swiss Pacifists (headed by Edmond Privat and Pierre Cérésole) organized public meetings in Lausanne and Geneva, respectively. Gandhi, refusing the motor car which is offered him, takes the train to Lausanne, travelling in third class, as his custom is. There a large crowd awaits him, eager to hear him speak, and receiving enthusiastically the answers that Gandhi gives to the various questions put to him at the public meeting, answers which are remarkable for their precision, their clearness, for the presence of mind they show, as also for their biting frankness. But the two private gatherings at Lausanne are more moving still. Of these one is set apart for his personal friends, at which Pierre Cérésole, founder of the Civil International Service, states to Gandhi his point of view on the practice of non-violence. Cérésole (that noble personage who has just passed from the scene) believes that he can reconcile with his duties as a loyal citizen his passionate fight against war and militarism. He thinks that, if a conscientious objector refuses to comply with the obligation of compulsory military service, because to him it represents a maleficent and destructive force, he owes the State voluntary service, beneficent and constructive, in exchange for the protection it gives him, and hence should pledge himself to assist the victims of national and international calamities. On this basis was created the Civil International Service. Gandhi, on the other hand, explains that for him there is only one logical attitude possible towards a militaristic Government,

to butcher them, their death at least would bear good fruit."

The other question refers to the class struggle. And Gandhi answers: "Labour does not know its own power. Did it know it, it would only have to rise to have capitalism crumble away. For Labour is the only power in the world."

Such statements fill the bourgeoisie with silent fury while most of the audience applaud.

One can understand, however, that such declarations by Gandhi were looked upon as dangerous by the authorities and commented upon with indignation by the press. It is very likely that, if the departure of the Mahatma had not already been fixed for the next day, his expulsion as an undesirable, might have been considered.

That same day, Gandhi, indefatigable and having taken only a few minutes' sleep on the hard benches of the third class compartment, was back in Villeneuve to have one more talk with my brother, in the short free interval before the evening prayers. These were held on this day, on the ground floor of the Villa Olga, so as to allow Romain Rolland to be present. Afterwards, in the silence which followed the last hymn, my brother, accompanied only by Gandhiji, Mira and myself, went up to his little music room. There, at the request of the Mahatma, he played on the piano an *andante* movement of a symphony of Beethoven, an invocation without words to the Deity, by the religious soul of the great composer. For Gandhi knew that it was through Beethoven that Mira had known Romain Rolland, and that it was to Beethoven therefore that he owed his faithful disciple.....

The following day, Friday the 11th of December, the sun, which on the previous days had hidden itself, flooded the country, revealing to our guests for the first time the mountains and glaciers clear of mists, and the sparkling lake. That morning there took place the last interview, even more intimate and more affectionate than the preceding ones. Then the preparations for the departure. The good weather fortunately permitted my brother to go to the station. On the square, a sympathetic and curious crowd

## WHEN GANDHIJI CAME TO BENGAL

*Nalini Ranjan Sarkar*

**M**Y first opportunity for close personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi came in May-June, 1925, when he made a long tour in Bengal. While Mahatmaji was away in the Bengal districts, a great calamity befell Bengal and India: Deshbandhu C. R. Das suddenly breathed his last. Mahatmaji returned to Calcutta immediately on receipt of the news of this calamity, and lived for a time in the late Deshbandhu's residence which the latter had made over to the nation under a trust deed. Gandhiji busied himself then in efforts to raise funds for the implementation of the work of the trust as a memorial to Deshbandhu, and also in settling certain questions of a political nature which arose in Bengal consequent on Deshbandhu's death. Deshbandhu was at the time of his death Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and Leader of the Swaraj Party in the Bengal Legislative Council. Gandhiji selected the late Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta as the person who should undertake this triple burden after Deshbandhu's demise.

It was about this time that Gandhiji one day asked me most casually what time I generally got up in the morning. The question was asked without any context and seemed inconsequential. However, I told him I was an early riser, whereupon he said to me: "Very well, get up as early as you can tomorrow and join me in my morning walk in the maidan." He added that he had something to tell me. As he did not say anything more, I was naturally left to guess what the matter might be that he wanted to talk to me about. This took place in Deshbandhu's house in the early part of the day. In the evening, however, as Mahatmaji was coming out of Sreejukta Basanti Devi's house, I accidentally met him near the staircase, and he told me as soon as we met that I need not come next morning to meet him, since the matter on which he had wanted to talk to me had been settled meanwhile. Then he mentioned to me the incident in regard to which he had thought

of his party and answer the charge. At the meeting they mentioned the names of two or three Muslim members of the Council whose votes, they alleged, we had influenced by payment of money. I pointed out in reply that both the Councillors named belonged to the Swaraj Party, and we had on occasions paid them money to meet debts incurred at the time of the elections, or in similar other circumstances, but in no case had we paid money to any member outside our party for securing his vote. Gandhiji asked our accusers if they could give names of any members outside our party whom we might have tried to purchase by money. As they apparently had no concrete facts of this nature to put forward and remained silent, Gandhiji dismissed the whole matter with the remark that there was nothing wrong in helping comrades in work with money in cases of genuine necessity.

His attitude regarding public funds is brought out by an incident within my personal knowledge. He was then organising collections for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund and Congress workers had been asked to make house to house collections. One worker charged Rs. 67 out of the collections he had made, for taxi hire incurred by him. Gandhiji strongly objected to this, and said that the worker had no business to pay taxi fare out of the collections; that, if such practices were allowed, the sanctity of public funds would be in jeopardy. He was so stern about the matter that the worker in question had to make good the money from his own pocket, or, maybe, from some other source.

There is just another small incident in connection with the memorial of Deshbandhu Das. A bank manager volunteered to collect money for the memorial fund, and Gandhiji agreed. Later on, however, in Deshbandhu Das's correspondence Gandhiji found a reference to this gentleman, from which he came to learn that Deshbandhu had a very poor opinion about this particular gentleman in financial matters. No sooner did he come to know this than he issued instructions that this gentleman should not be

and the then Editor of the *Statesman*. Gandhiji spoke to them assuringly, and they seemed to be more or less reassured. What followed is now history. About 3,000 detenus were immediately released. With regard to convicted political prisoners a policy of gradual release after individual review of cases was decided upon. On this last point Gandhiji could not reconcile himself. He pressed time and again to stand security for the convicted political prisoners so that they could also be released immediately. Unfortunately the Government did not agree to this, and Gandhiji felt sorely about it even long afterwards.

After the first Bengal Ministry under Provincial Autonomy, of which I was a member, had been formed, Bengal Congress leaders began an agitation for the overthrow of the Ministry, and I was requested to resign. It was suggested to me that my resignation would strengthen their hands in regard to the overthrow of the Ministry. I felt that the proposal of overthrowing the Ministry was not based on any clear issue or principle; the objective seemed to be just to break the Ministry. In the circumstances I did not consider resignation at the time justifiable. The Congress leaders thereupon approached Gandhiji for persuading me to resign. I received a wire from Gandhiji asking me to see him at Wardha in this connection. In pursuit of Gandhiji's behest I saw him and put my viewpoint before him as objectively as possible. He was thoroughly convinced that I should not resign at that stage. Consequently he addressed a letter to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, which is being quoted here from a copy:

"I must dictate this as I am wilfully blind. Whilst I am dictating this, Maulana Saheb, Nalini Babu and Ghanshyamdas are listening. We had an exhaustive discussion over the Bengal Ministry. I am more than ever convinced that we should not aim at ousting the Ministry. We shall gain nothing by a reshuffle. And, probably, we shall lose much by including Congressmen in the Ministry. I feel, therefore, that the best way of securing comparative parity of administration and a continuity of a settled programme

member for the Department of Education, Health and Lands, Gandhiji was kind enough to write to me on occasions advising about such matters as public health improvement, cow protection, etc.

Calcutta,  
7-1-1947.

## HOW SOME OF HIS DECISIONS WERE MADE

*Chandrashanker Shukla*

AT the Kanpur session of the Congress in December 1925, Gandhiji, in consultation with friends, decided to spend the whole, or the better part, of the next year at the Sabarmati Ashram. The decision was primarily due to a breakdown in his health a month earlier. In order to enable him to take the maximum of rest it was suggested to him that, besides dictating his English correspondence to a stenographer as he was doing, he should abstain from writing even Gujarati letter. I, then being the youngest member of the teaching staff at the Ashram school, was asked to act as an amanuensis to take down his Gujarati letters and, occasionally, notes and articles for the weekly *Navajivan*. The time set apart for this purpose was an hour or so from 1 p.m. after his siesta was over. At times this period would lengthen beyond the fixed limit. "This is a relaxation for you," Gandhiji once said to me; but I knew what a rare good fortune it was for me, this being my first real opportunity to come into closer contact with him.

During the summer that year a Conference of the World's Y.M.C.A.s was to be held at Helsingfors (now Helsinki), the capital of Finland, and Gandhiji had been prevailed upon to accept an invitation to attend it.

once called on Gandhiji. This was the time of the day when he occasionally dropped in and regaled Gandhiji with his jokes and humorous 'stories'. On this particular occasion he was accompanied by Dr. Kanuga who examined Gandhiji and found him quite well. Shri Vallabhbhai then told Gandhiji—gently but with a touch of humour—that he was quite well where he was, and that he need not go to a hill station or anywhere else. The doctor supported him. It was amazing to see that the Sardar had to say no more than these few words in order to dissuade Gandhiji from leaving Sabarmati. The projected visit to Dalhousie was cancelled without any further ado. Shri Mahadev Desai said to me that evening, not without a trace of disappointment at having had to forego a little hard-earned rest, "I have seen how, with us, man proposes and Vallabhbhai disposes!!" (It may be remembered in this connection that in 1936 the Sardar, who was then ill, agreed to accompany Gandhiji to the Nandi Hills at the latter's behest. The Sardar, presumably, had good reasons for the same on this occasion. Very probably he thought he would be mentally happier, in spite of the fact that he was surrounded by the Ashram inmates than on his tours. The Ashram he considered this was the first time since its establishment that he had heard Gandhiji saying once again: "Whenever I get exhausted, I come here for a while, recharge the battery for my journey!"

with Jamnalal Bajaj, who was on a tour, Gandhiji to agree to a small, one-story bungalow put up at the Ashram, where the latter could work undisturbed by prying visitors who came at all odd hours. The plan was welcomed by many. The next day, however, Gandhiji announced after the evening prayer that, though he had been unwarily betrayed into agreeing to the plan, he had been ill at ease since then.



soon as I came out of the prison. You can call that a gesture, if you like."

On the second day of this fast Gandhiji wired to Pandit Malaviya: "Your blessings comfort me. Have been carrying out your advice in spirit. From childhood *Rāmnām* has been my talisman. Am well and at peace. Pray do not trouble come."

To Dr. Ansari he wired: "Sarojini mentioned your press statement. Dread trouble you. But it is your right and duty. Come when you feel like it. You know my faith in you. Love to you all." The good doctor left Delhi the next day for Poona, and remained there throughout the duration of the fast.

On the 3rd day of the fast Gandhiji wrote to an inmate of the Ashram at Sabarmati: "I see that there is more effort in dictating than in writing. As days proceed I may not be able to write or dictate. Then you will know that my thoughts are speaking to you.....Do please fill your mind with the task before you, i.e. to become an ideal member of the Ashram, no matter what the others are."

Gandhiji continued to receive letters during the fast from loving and devoted friends and co-workers from India and abroad. Many of these in India were scattered far and wide at the call of duty, and were serving their terms of imprisonment in different jails in the country. At the end of a letter, in French, dated the 2nd of May, M. Romain Rolland said: "If the Cross has not—alas—saved the world, it has shown to the world the way to save itself; it has illuminated with its light the nights of millions of unfortunates.

"—But may this sacrifice be spared today. May you remain long yet—I will not say amongst us (because I doubt if my life—ill as I am—will be very prolonged now)—but amongst our brothers and sisters of India and of the world who need your presence on the boat to guide them in the tempest.

life without you. But I am surer that I am nearer to you here than I would be even at your side. Last evening I was by the side of a little starving child. Her fast was involuntary, and as I looked at the protruding bones and tiny wizened face, and the poor wasted body, I thought: 'How can I believe in a God that allows such things to be?' And I looked round on the wretched huts of the peasants, symbol of their lifelong struggle with every sorrow, and I could see no evidence for His existence anywhere. And then I came to the Ashram and found the news of the fast: and at once I saw evidence of God who inspires such things. And I felt too that I would be very near you if I was wherever there is suffering.....In the breaking of the frail earthen lantern of your body, Truth will shine to us. My heart is too full to write more. Such suffering as I have had has all become joy through you. In the sacred bonds of Truth we shall be united for all eternity. Your devoted and loving son Verrier."

There was a long letter from the Rt. Hon. Shri S. Srinivasa Sastri dated the 7th of May. He had addressed Gandhiji as "Dearest Brother", and said: "After much thought and destruction of many drafts, I have decided that the best reply to your 'begging' and most touching letter of the 2nd inst. is the enclosed extract.....It would have been useless and, as you said in your first statement, embarrassing for me to try to dissuade. What remains for your friends and associates is to wish that you may come out of the ordeal not merely unscathed, but armed afresh with the strength of *tapas* for the struggle that seems without end."

After expressing his dissent from the decision to fast, he said: "Our *values* are different fundamentally. The difference is radical, no sophistry can abolish it." He then discussed the relative merits of reason and intuition, and concluded by saying: "Treat the letter as if it were nothing but an expression of my unchanged love and of my fervent wish that you should live long and serve the great causes you cherish. For, contrary to your teaching, I hold that you are more potent than your memory can be."

would go on till the facilities to carry on Harijan work from prison were restored to him. As the full reasons for this fast have never been published, I venture to give here the inner story in brief.

During Gandhiji's fast against the British Government's decision re: Harijans in September, 1932, visitors had free access to him. On the 5th day after the termination of the fast, the visits were suddenly stopped. In the course of a letter to the Prison Superintendent Gandhiji said: "The Government cannot be unaware of the phenomenal awakening that has taken place in the country nor of the repercussions of the fast whose limitations have been but little understood and which is being blindly imitated by enthusiastic young men. I, therefore, hold it to be absolutely necessary that I should be left entirely free to see whomsoever I consider necessary regarding untouchability.....Needless to say, what applies to visitors regarding untouchability applies equally to correspondence."

A little later he wrote to the Home Member of the Government of Bombay a letter in the course of which he said: "Surely untouchability reform should be, if it is not, common cause between the Government and the people.....You may know that my fast is only suspended. It has to be resumed, if the Hindu public do not play the game by the Harijans. My contact with the public, therefore, is inevitable if the reform is to be carried out in all its thoroughness."

The facilities then offered by the Government were considered inadequate by Gandhiji; and, at the end of a letter to the Inspector General of Prisons dated 24th October, 1932, Gandhiji said: "Unless, therefore, the restrictions as submitted above are not removed on or before the 1st of November next, I shall be reluctantly obliged to withdraw, subject to the limitations imposed by the law of satyagraha, such co-operation as is possible for me to do. And as a preliminary, I shall deny myself all the feeding facilities permitted to me and restrict myself to such 'C' class diet as I can within my vow consistently

four days from 1st inst., among other things I might be obliged to stop food altogether. This I mention to convey to Government some idea of intensity of my feeling. Almost daily I am getting letters about untouchability, from reformers and reactionaries, demanding immediate attention and reply designed for publication. A matter in which millions of people have to be influenced cannot be handled by private correspondence under ban of publication. I have letters and telegrams from recently formed All India Anti-Untouchability League asking for guidance and advice as to method of work. I have most important letters from Calicut demanding immediate reply and request from 'untouchable' friends seeking emergent interviews. Knowing this and knowing that my life is at stake in anti-untouchability campaign, Government will appreciate my readiness and desire to forfeit it, if in this matter I am not to be allowed full and unfettered facilities as requested in my letter. A prisoner has no other honourable outlet from an intolerable and soul-killing position."

The following orders were conveyed to Gandhiji on 3rd November, 1932:

"Government of India recognise, in view of considerations stated in Mr. Gandhi's letters of October 18th and October 24th that if he is to carry out the programme that he has set before himself in regard to removal of untouchability, which they had not before fully appreciated, it is necessary that he should have freedom in regard to visitors and correspondence on matters strictly limited to removal of untouchability.

"They also recognise that, if Mr. Gandhi's activities in this matter are to be fully effective, there can be no restriction on publicity.

"As they do not wish to interpose obstacles to Mr. Gandhi's efforts in connection with the problem of untouchability, they are removing all restrictions on visitors, correspondence and publicity in regard to matters which, in Mr. Gandhi's own words, 'have no reference to civil disobedience and are strictly limited to removal of untouchability'.

interest me if I may not do Harijan service without let or hindrance. As I have made it clear in my previous correspondences, and as the Government of India have admitted, permission to render that service is implied in the Yeravda Pact to which the British Government is consenting party, in so far as this consent is necessary. Therefore, I do indeed want the permission only if the Government believe that justice demands it, and not because I propose to deprive myself of food if it is not granted. That deprivation is intended purely for my consolation."

The facilities offered by the Government were hedged in by so many restrictions that they were considered by Gandhiji to be utterly inadequate for his purpose. He stated his minimum requirements, and as there was no reply to that communication the next day, he began his fast at noon on the 16th, with a reading of chapters 12 to 17 of the Gita, and the song *Uth jāg musāfar bhor bhai* (The dawn is here, O traveller, arise).<sup>4</sup>

In a letter dated the 19th to the Home Secretary, Bombay Government, Gandhiji said: "But I have now understood through Mr. Andrews that the difficulty in the way of Government carrying out the orders of the Government of India, to which I have already referred, is that instead of being a State prisoner I am now a convicted prisoner. If that be the cause for a radical departure from a policy explicitly laid down by the Government, not by way of concession, but, as the Government of India have admitted, "because it is necessary that he (I) should have freedom in regard to visitors and correspondence on matters strictly limited to removal of untouchability," "there being no restriction on publicity," I cannot understand how what was considered to be necessary for me becomes any the less necessary now by reason of my being a convicted prisoner. Just as Government have recognised my physical wants and satisfied them in spite of my being a convict, even so, I venture to submit, my spiritual wants regarding untouchability demand full recognition from Government."

4. For an English rendering, by Shrimati Padmaja Naidu, of this Hindustani song, see Pyarelal : *The Epic Fast*, p. 147.

day between 3 and 4 in the afternoon; he broke the fast with orange juice, and, accompanied by Ba and Mr. Andrews, was brought to 'Parnakuti' in a very weak condition.

He was then faced with the question as to his future course of action. To a co-worker he wrote on the same day: "I hope you were not worried over my fast, as by now you must be used to these fasts of my life. Heaven knows how many more I would have to go through. Therefore you should take my fast as in the ordinary course without being agitated." To Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta he wrote: "It is a great question now what to do with this so-called freedom that I am supposed to have got. But God will show a way in His own time." To Shrimati Urmila Devi, sister of Deshbandhu Das, he wrote: "I can picture to myself the agony you must have gone through. ....I am sorry I am without Mahadev this time. It is a funny experience for me to be without him, but we have to take things as God will have them for us." To another co-worker he wrote: "Of course I have suffered, but then you can't lead a true life without suffering." To Janab Abbas Tyabji he wrote: "Well, many strange things have happened in my life, but this discharge is the strangest. However, there it is, and I must take it as it comes; only I do not know what to do with myself. God will clear the way for me. Till then I must wait on Him." To Lala Girdharilal of Lahore he wrote: "As for myself, fasting has evidently become a part of my life. I had not the vaguest notion that I would have to fast this time. But there was no escape from it." He exchanged views with some of the co-workers who came to see him. He was very much hurt by a tendentious report which the Poona correspondent of the *Times of India* sent out one of these days; and he mentioned it to Mr. Andrews as soon as he met the latter the next morning: "I am living like a Prince in a marble palace, and I have cost Lady Thackersey 19,000 rupees! It appeared first in the *Capital*, and now in the *Times of India*. But this is no marble palace, only

should find a place in small unorganised industries of national importance which give a better wage." Later on, after he settled down at Wardha at the conclusion of the Harijan tour, the All India Village Industries Association was established, and with the passage of years it has grown into a large tree with many branches spreading over the whole of India. But the seed of the tree was sown during the conversation that took place at Guruvayur before dawn on the 11th of January, 1934.

In the latter half of May, 1934, Gandhiji undertook a walking tour for Harijan work. The idea first occurred to him during the previous months when during motor journeys three or four stray dogs were accidentally killed, at different times, by the car in which he was travelling. On these occasions he felt very much pained, was disgusted with motor journeys, and giving expression to his agony said he would far rather give up travelling in motor cars and walk on foot from place to place. Once an idea 'subconsciously found a place in his mind, he would invest it with many other virtues. After his car was wantonly attacked by hostile Sanatanists at Jassidih (Bihar), and he had a providential escape, the idea of the walking tour took a more definite shape. He felt that "the car was a red rag to the bull, and that my walking tour would perhaps disarm the black-flags' anger and sober the crowd of sympathisers and admirers." He adumbrated the plan at a private conference of leaders at Ranchi on the 1st of May; and the tour, which lasted from 9th May to 16th May, and from 21st May to 7th June, turned out to be an unqualified success.

A party of Sanatanist young men, headed by one Swami Lalnath, a sannyasi, followed Gandhiji from place to place in North India, obstructed his passage wherever possible, and kept on shouting their slogans at odd hours during train journeys and meetings. At Akola, in the earlier part of the tour, the Swami disclosed to Gandhiji their intention in indulging in what the latter called "a

hope Lalnath does not desire. Request showing this telegram to Lalnath. Hope you will agree reducing period of fast. Step rather drastic. Finally your discretion." In the morning of the 10th Gandhiji wrote out a statement announcing this decision; and, after it was shown to Sjts. Jairamdas, Thakkar Bapa and Kakasaheb, it was issued to the Press. I had asked him the night before if he would not consider the request for reducing the number of days. He replied: "Seven is the least number. This is to be a penance, and that too a public one. One should not be calculating in such matters." On the 10th he wrote to Mirabehn who was then on a visit to Britain: "The incident calls for the penance, because there was a clear breach of pledge. Nothing on earth is so serious perhaps as breach of pledge of safety. If I had greater capacity, I would have taken a longer fast. You must not be disturbed. You would go on with your appointed task unmoved." To Shri Natarajan he wired: "Cause too great for overlooking Ajmer neglect duty." And to Shri Birla: "Nothing less than seven days meets case." A telegram came from Shri Mathuradas Tricumji that evening: "Postpone decision penance. Letter posted Lahore," to which Gandhiji replied: "Decision taken. Inevitable. Read statement." Another moving appeal came from Shri Mahadevbhai, who was just released from jail, from Bombay: "Pranams. Hoping report myself Lahore fourteenth latest. Pray have mercy Brother Ass. Spare us further earthquake shocks." But it was too late. In a letter dated the 16th Gandhiji wrote to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from Lahore: "The fast had to come. Such was God's will. So long as He desires service from me, I shall be unhurt."

In September that year (1934) Gandhiji announced his decision to retire from the Congress. It may be remembered that during the Harijan tour Gandhiji paid a three days' special visit to Calcutta from the 19th to the 21st of July; and though handsome collections—over Rs. 72,000 in three days—were made for the Harijan fund, the "primary object this time" was, to quote Gandhiji's own words, "to



anywhere seen the wonders it has worked during the elections with the least amount of expenses? No, in this matter, your prejudice has got the better of your judgment. Remember that Rajendraprasad, Vallabhbhai, Rajagopalachari, Ansari, Mahadev, and many others, of whom humanity may be proud, are in it, of it, and would die for it."

A little earlier, at the end of the Bombay session of the Congress, i.e. just after the formal retirement, he issued a public appeal to voters for the coming elections to the Central Legislative Assembly (I had the privilege of seeing him write it out), in which he said: "If Congressmen have understood the spirit underlying my retirement from the Congress, it ought to mean redoubling of honest and persistent effort to return Congress candidates to the Assembly. I have retired not to weaken the national organisation but to strengthen it. I have seen notices from adverse parties which, under the guise of praising me, suggest that I leave the Congress in disgust. This is absolutely untrue. I entertain the highest regard for the Congress. When we achieve our goal, as we will and must, the Congress will be found to have contributed the largest share in the attainment. There is thus in the present fight a battle between measures, not men. Every vote given to a Congress candidate means so much progress towards our goal. An institution that has just passed a self-denying ordinance in the shape of the new rigorous constitution, in my opinion, deserves unilateral support. That can just now be best expressed by sending as many Congressmen as possible to the Assembly."

And, after the elections, he wrote, in a letter to Shri Konda Venkatappayya (Guntur) dated 23-11-1934: "Yes, the Assembly elections have been a perfect revelation. The South has easily topped the list with its 100 per cent victories and overwhelming majorities. It is a further demonstration of the unfailing victory of truth and sacrifice."

In April, 1937, after getting large majorities in the

to hold itself in patience for three months and a half?" "Yes," came the candid reply, "we have made a great advance over the Government of India Act." I often heard a Provincial Minister admitting, out of humility, that Gandhiji with his superior vision on this occasion proved to be right, and the others (including himself) proved to be wrong.

The sharp difference of opinion between Gandhiji and a majority of the Congress Working Committee, that came to the fore in the latter part of 1940, is now a matter of history. For the first time in many years Gandhiji did not attend the meeting of the A.I.C.C. held at Poona in July 1940. Later further discussions took place at Wardha in the first week of September. Gandhiji found the restrictions imposed by the Government most irksome, and was keen on fasting as a supreme national protest against it. On the 5th, at Wardha, the Working Committee tried to dissuade Gandhiji from undertaking a fast, but their arguments had no effect on Gandhiji, and at the end of the day's sitting he declared that the fast was inevitable. On the way back to Sevagram he was accompanied by Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Shri Mahadev Desai, and Shri Mathuradas Tricumji. During the two miles' walk Mahadevbhai had a long discussion with Gandhiji. At the end of a prolonged argument M.D. said to him: "Bapu, twenty years back you declared from one end of the country to the other that, in Thoreau's words, there could be no place for an honest man except in prison under an unjust government. Why do you seem to forget the same thing now? When was there greater injustice on the earth than today? It is true you wish to cover the whole country by your fast, but you are obviously overlooking the great doctrine which you had yourself placed before the country. Why should small men not offer their small sacrifices? etc., etc." The next morning, during the walk, Gandhiji said: "Mahadev, do you know what a miracle you wrought yesterday?" "No," said M.D. nonchalantly. Gandhiji said: "The last thing that you mentioned in your talk

## HIS WAY OF CONVERSION

P. Subbarayan

**M**Y youngest son bears Bapu's name, and I gave it to him out of affection and regard for Bapu. So when he turned Communist and I felt distressed, I wrote to Bapu as to what could be done. He wrote back and said that I must remember Vyasa's saying that 'when a son gets to an understanding age, he should be regarded as a friend and not to be dictated to.' I thought it was the best advice, and have carried it out in my dealings with all my children, as it is best not to meddle in their affairs, specially when they are of an age to judge for themselves what is good.

After Mohan came back from England and actively took part in the Communist Party work, went underground and was finally tried in the Communist Conspiracy Case, I wrote to Bapu whether he had read his statement before the Court, as I wanted to know what his reactions were. He wrote back and told me that he had read bits of it, but that if I could send him the whole statement he would read it again carefully and give me his opinion. This letter touched me deeply as I knew how busy he was at that time; and his offer to read the whole statement which ran to several columns in a newspaper showed his great affection for me and my family. I sent him the cutting out of the *Hindu*. After a week or so he wrote back and said that it was the statement of a brave son of India, and even though he did not agree with the ideology, he said the boy must be allowed to serve the country in his own way.

Afterwards at Ramgarh during the Congress session, in March 1940, I took Mohan to see Bapu, and left him with the latter. When I met Bapu again, he said: "I have had a long talk with Mohan, but I do not think I have converted him. We must not force our opinions on the young, but should go on trying to see whether we can get them to our way of thinking by affection and not by dictation." Mohan was since then in touch with him all the time, and had been to see him several times in connection with

## GANDHJI AND MEDICINE

*G. R. Talwalkar*

**I**T was in about the middle of 1918 that I first came in personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi. He was then in a bad condition of health due to acute dysentery. Dr. B. N. Kanuga of Ahmedabad was treating him, and was feeling very puzzled as to how to persuade him to take a few injections of emetine which alone was the right remedy for Gandhiji's trouble. But Mahatmaji was firm that he would not allow his body to be injected with the medicine, and he asked for some nature cure method of treatment. We, doctors, have not, I must admit, paid sufficient attention to nature cure methods according to Mahatmaji's conception, but I must say that for acute amoebic dysentery there is no treatment so sure as a few injections of emetine hydrochloride. We were almost at our wit's end how to give Mahatmaji emetine. Suddenly it struck me that, if we proposed to him an enema, he would gladly allow us that procedure. So we proposed to him that we would only give him an enema. He at once agreed, and we added to the enema water a full dose of emetine and morphia. This little procedure had such marvellous effect on our patient within the next twentyfour hours that he voluntarily asked for a repetition of the same enema procedure for five successive days, with the result that his dysentery was cured and he was able to travel from Nadiad to Ahmedabad in a week's time and placed himself completely under my care without questioning my authority. Soon, however, I discovered that he was taking no food and even no milk. He was under the impression that a dozen or two of oranges were enough for maintaining his nutrition; and when I said that it could not support his body and strength for more than a few days, he challenged me to convince him about the fallacy of his fancy. So I showed to him from a well-known authority on dietetics that, if a man wished to live entirely on oranges, he would require about 50 to 75 oranges a day to give him enough nourishment, but that

to me a letter asking for my experiences with it. I had been using a concentrated extract of garlic in cases of lung tuberculosis with very gratifying results, but I could not convince my medical brothers about this. However, I found that Gandhiji at once took to the daily use of garlic; and I yet believe that his continued good health for years after his high blood pressure had frightened doctors out of their wits, may be attributed to the regular use of garlic. Gandhiji always had an open mind; and though inconveniently inquisitive at the beginning, he was the most enthusiastic follower of a principle once he was convinced about its soundness. Here is the key of a great mind.

Bombay,  
5-6-1948.

## MY FIRST MEETING WITH GANDHIJI

*Tan Yun-shan*

I FIRST met Gandhiji at Bardoli in April, 1931. But I had the first glimpse of him about three years ago at an annual session of the National Congress held at Calcutta in December, 1928. Before going to Calcutta to attend the Congress session, I took leave of Gurudeva Tagore. Gurudeva advised me that I should meet Gandhiji there. "Would you give me a line of introduction?" I asked. "There's no need; Gandhiji will be very glad to meet you," Gurudeva replied.

Calcutta was then quite a strange place to me, for I had only passed through it once a few months back when I came to Santiniketan as well as to India for the first time. I could hardly find out Gandhiji's whereabouts. Moreover, I thought that it might not be appropriate and

Dalai Lama, was especially interested in Gandhiji's way of living and his satyagraha movement. He therefore asked me to convey his personal message to Gandhiji when I was returning to India. This added a special mission and urgency to my eagerness to visit Gandhiji.

I wrote to Gandhiji immediately after I had returned to Santiniketan from Lhasa, informing him of my longing to visit him and requesting him to grant me a *darshan*. He responded very promptly and asked me to meet him in New Delhi on any near date which might be convenient for me. On my way to Delhi, I availed myself of the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to all the important sacred places of Lord Buddha along the Ganges, such as Buddha Gaya, Rajagiri, Nalanda, Sarnath, Kushinagara, Lumbini, Sravasti and Sankisa. But after visiting these places, I was much delayed, and when I arrived at Delhi Gandhiji had already gone back to his Satyagrahashram at Sabarmati. I then followed him in his track. As I have mentioned before, the Satyagrahashram was also in my plan where I would stay for some years; although I could not materialize this long-cherished idea, I could at least see the place now. But when I arrived at the Ashram, Gandhiji again had gone to Bardoli for some urgent and important meetings. The Secretary of the Ashram, Shri Narandas K. Gandhi, was very kind to me; he showed me everything of the Ashram and treated me just as a brother. He lost no time to send a wire to Gandhiji for me, and Gandhiji immediately replied that I was welcome to Bardoli, and that he would stay there for a few days more. I then again followed him to Bardoli.

On my way from Sabarmati to Bardoli, a very interesting incident happened which has a vivid impression on my mind even now. It occurred at the Surat station where I had to change and wait for another train. I had just entered the waiting room. A C.I.D. followed me and made some inquiries about who I was, where I came from, what I was doing in India, and what was my purpose of visiting Gandhi. I told him very frankly all the truth, and he was not only satisfied but pleased and left. I then had a

time past. Can you stay with us for some days?" I said: "Yes. I am not in a hurry and would see Gandhiji when it will be convenient for him." He said: "That's very good;" and left. After about half an hour, Devadas came again and told us that Gandhiji would see Mr. Dua in the evening and meet me the next morning, but I could also see him in the evening if I would like to do so. He added that there were prayers every day in the early morning and in late evening, and asked whether I would like to attend these prayers which Gandhiji himself conducted. I told him: "I would certainly attend the prayers, but would like to meet Gandhiji next morning as appointed by him."

On the next day, the 27th April, 1931, I got up very early and attended the morning prayer which began at exactly 4 a.m. and ended in less than half an hour. As it was still dark and I was a little bit tired after a long pilgrimage, I returned to my room after the prayer and slept again. And Mr. Dua left for his destination. At half past ten, Shri Devadas came and took me to Gandhiji. He was staying in the upper storey of a two-storied building. The room was as neat and tidy as the guest room in which I was put up and also without any furniture excepting a big square mattress and a long pillow both covered with white khaddar. Gandhiji was sitting and spinning on the mattress, backed by the pillow; and the pillow and the mattress were backed by the wall. As soon as I came to the door of his room, he beckoned me with a gracious call: "Come in! Come in!" I paid him my profoundest adoration and salutation. He took the precedence of me and said:

"I have been expecting you for a long time, first in Delhi, then at Sabarmati. I was quite anxious whether anything happened to you. Now, I am very glad that at last you have come here."

"Many thanks for your kindness," I said. "I am extremely sorry that I have been much delayed on the way. But the delay was due to my pilgrimage to the Sacred

“What has His Holiness written? Was it written in Tibetan?”

“I do not know what His Holiness has written. But it might have been written in Tibetan. For, His Holiness does not know any foreign language, and the letter was written by himself with his own hand. To be faithful to him and to you, as a messenger, I did not and could not see it.”

“Very well, you can see it now.” He laughed and opened the letter. “Oh, you are right. It was exactly written in Tibetan. Can you translate it for me?”

“No, I have no knowledge of the Tibetan language and have only learnt the alphabets while at Lhasa.”

“Then it will never be understood by me.” We all broke into laughter once again.

The letter was written on a typical Tibetan paper in long shape, bearing two seals in vermillion ink, one of big size, the official one, and the other of smaller size, the personal one. It was wrapped with a long piece of pure white cloth, called “Cartar” in Tibetan. The “Cartar” is an emblem of love, affection and respect. In Tibet, when people meet for the first time or on some special occasion, they exchange their “Cartars” as we exchange our cards. When they receive or visit elderly and respectable persons, they first offer their “Cartars” as we offer our garlands. The Tibetans also do their worship with “Cartars” as we do with flowers. Although Gandhiji could not read the letter, he appreciated and enjoyed it much. I asked him whether he would be so kind as to acknowledge receipt of and reply to the letter. He quickly responded:

“Oh, yes, I shall write to him, but not the reply, because I do not know the contents of his letter. Since I do not know Tibetan, I shall write in Gujarati so that he may also not understand it but enjoy it as I do,” he said joyfully.

“But you certainly understand each other without knowing each other’s language, as Lord Buddha said that all Buddhas understand each other by heart and not by speech. Don’t you think so?”

He looked at me smiling. We then talked about China



rested in talking about the Chinese way of living.

"Your people are very artistic. They lead even their daily life artistically. But one thing I do not like much, that is that they take too much meat. Is it not so?" he remarked.

"No, it is not quite true, Mahatmaji. Most of the Chinese people do not take much meat. Especially the village people of China are almost pure vegetarians. They may have meat only on a few special occasions in a year, such as the New Year and other seasonal festivals or when they have important guests. Moreover, cow-slaughter is usually prohibited. Your conclusion is drawn perhaps only from the habit of the few Chinese friends living in the few big cities of India such as Bombay and Calcutta or some such place," I explained to him.

"I am very glad to hear your explanation," he intervened. "Are you a vegetarian?"

"No, I have not yet been. But I also prefer vegetarian diet to meat," I told him frankly.

"Then, I would advise you to give up all non-vegetarian food and be a pure vegetarian. Can't you?" he persuaded me.

"Yes, I can," I boldly answered and agreed. "I have been contemplating for some time past to take only pure vegetarian food. Now, as you have so graciously advised me, I will certainly try to be a vegetarian as much as possible and will regard this as a happy memory of our meeting."

He was much pleased with my taking of the pledge and wished me all success.

By the time, we had already come to the place where the pre-arranged car was waiting—the place was surrounded by hundreds of people including men and women, old, young, and children. They gathered together there simply for a *darshan* of the Mahatma. When they saw Gandhiji, they shouted very loudly and unitedly: "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" Then they made *pranama* to him and took the dust off his feet. The men offered him money, some with big notes, some with a few rupees, some with

at this juncture, but those friends very affectionately asked me to go to their place with Gandhiji for a while, and told me that there was still ample time for me to get my train for Bombay. So I went with them. Such was the rush of visitors that we could hardly get out of the station.

I stayed there for about two hours and had dinner with them. After that, Shri Devadas and two other friends took me round the ancient city of Surat and accompanied me to the station. Before leaving, I paid Gandhiji again my profoundest salutation and adoration, and asked him: "May I take your leave and say good-bye to you now?" He grasped my hands, nodded, smiled and looked at me just as a father grasping the hands of his child. I nearly wept by his boundless *Maitri* and *Karūṇā*, and felt great sadness at leaving him. All friends there said in one voice: "You must come again," and I bade them all farewell!

After touring through Bombay and Madras, I came back to Calcutta on 6th May, 1931. Gandhiji's promised message to the Chinese students along with his reply to His Holiness, the late Dalai Lama, had already reached my Calcutta-address before my arrival. His reply to the late Dalai Lama was really written in Gujarati with his own hand as he said at Bardoli, but his message to the Chinese students, which was embodied in a short letter addressed to me was written in English and this also with his own hand. I posted the Gujarati letter to His Holiness the late Dalai Lama without knowing the contents, and brought the message to China, which had been widely published in almost all the big Chinese journals and had been deeply appreciated and long remembered not only by the students but by the whole people of my country. This was his first message to China.

In conclusion, I quote this message below, not only as a loving memory of my first meeting with Gandhiji but as an emblem of the long, great and intimate friendship which started two thousand years ago and will continue for ever, between our two greatest countries, China and India;

